LOOK FOR THE FACE ON THE COVER OF THIS WEEK'S "SHORT STORIES."

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Send 7½ for
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LUMTREES,
OUTHPORT.
Delicious Flavour.

PEARSON'S WEEKLY.

TO INTEREST, TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE.

"NO BETTER FOOD."
DR. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., etc.
FRY'S PURE CONCENTRATED COCOA
Lavishly endowed with all those properties so essential to the Support, Building Up, and Strengthening of the System.
300 GOLD MEDALS &c.

[606.] TRANSMISSION AT BOOK RATES. WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 27, 1902. ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL [PRICE ONE PENNY.

A RAILWAY SIGNALMAN and

DR TIBBLES' Vi-Cocoa

"SINCE DRINKING VI-COCOA AM A DIFFERENT MAN AND WEIGH TWO STONE HEAVIER."

Mr. T. WRIGHT, G.E.Ry., Signalman, Blackbank, nr. Ely, Cambridgeshire, writes:—

"I feel it my duty to explain to you the great benefit I have derived through drinking Vi-Cocoa, which I have done for the past three years. Previously I used to drink tea, but was obliged to give it up as I used to suffer from pains in the back and body, but since I have been drinking Vi-Cocoa I am a different man, and weigh two stone heavier than I did three years ago. I am a Great Eastern Railway signalman, and have to do day and night duty weeks about. When on night duty I hot my can up on the stove, and have a cup when I feel thirsty; it is as fresh in the morning as it is when put in the can at night. Tea used to make me feel faint, but now, thank God, my work in the box is not nearly so hard to me. I have recommended Vi-Cocoa to my fellow workmen, and they have commenced to use it. It is a grand thing, and ought to be used a great deal more by signalmen, and they would soon feel the benefit of it."

"UNDOUBTED PURITY AND STRENGTH."—*Medical Magazine.*
"IN THE FRONT RANK OF REALLY VALUABLE FOODS."—[illegible]

DR TIBBLES' Vi-Cocoa

FAVOURED BY THE HOMES & HOSPITALS OF GREAT BRITAIN.
DAINTY SAMPLE TIN FREE TO ANY ADDRESS.
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DAINTY SAMPLE FREE.

NOW IN THREE STRENGTHS
MILD, MEDIUM, & FULL.

GALLAHER'S "TWO FLAKES" TOBACCO.

In 1, 2, & 4oz. TINS, secured by patent band.

WATSON'S MATCHLESS CLEANSER

IS CHEAP, GOOD, EFFECTIVE. The Best Soap for all purposes. It Saves Time, Labour Money. Has the largest Sale of 1-lb. Tablets in the World.

BIG PRIZE SCHEME

For OCTOBER 1902.

38,199 PRIZES value £15,362

LIST OF PRIZES:

1	Cash Prize, £100	£100 0 0
1	Cash Prize, £75	75 0 0
1	Cash Prize, £50	50 0 0
1	Cash Prize, £45	45 0 0
5	Pianos (Walnut Cases), £40 each	200 0 0
10	Gents' Bicycles (Freewheels), £17 17s.	178 10 0
10	Ladies' Bicycles (Freewheels), £17 17s.	178 10 0
10	Cash Prize, £10 each	100 0 0
20	Jones's Sewing Machines, £8 each	160 0 0
20	Cased Cutlery, £8 each	160 0 0
20	Cash Prizes, £5 each	100 0 0
100	Dinner Services (56 pieces), £2 10s. each	250 0 0
100	Gold Jilled Gents' Watches, £2 10s. each	250 0 0
100	Ladies' Dressing Bags, £2 5s. each	225 0 0
100	Handsome Timepieces, £2 5s. each	225 0 0
100	Cash Prizes, £2 each	200 0 0
200	Ladies' Travelling Trunks, £2 each	400 0 0
200	Fancy Bed Quilts, £1 15s. each	350 0 0
1000	Pairs of Blankets, £1 per pair	1000 0 0
500	Basket Arm Chairs (upholstered), £1 each	500 0 0
1000	Ladies' Umbrellas 15s. each	750 0 0
1000	Gents' Umbrellas, 15s. each	750 0 0
400	½-doz. Best Electro-plated Forks, large, 18s. per ½-doz.	300 0 0
1000	Handsome Meat Carvers, with Steel, in case, 15s. per set	750 0 0
1,000	Ladies' Rolled Gold Bracelets, 15/- each	£750 0 0
400	½-doz. Best Electro-plated Forks, small, 14/- per ½-doz.	280 0 0
1,000	Pairs of Bed Sheets, 12/6 per pair	625 0 0
1,000	White Linen Table Cloths, 12/6 each	625 0 0
1,000	Cash Prizes, 10/- each	500 0 0
1,000	½-doz. Table Knives, large, 8/- per ½-doz.	400 0 0
1,000	½-doz. Table Knives, small, 6/- per ½-doz.	300 0 0
1,000	Ladies' Leather Purses, 5/- each	250 0 0
1,000	Ladies' Umbrellas, 7/6 each	375 0 0
1,000	Ladies' Serge Dress Lengths, 7/6 each	375 0 0
1,000	½-doz. Tea-spoons (Best Electro-plated), 5/- per ½-doz.	250 0 0
4,000	Ladies' Chatelaine Bags, 5/- each	1,000 0 0
500	Children's Tea Sets, 2/6 each	62 0 0
4,500	½-doz. Ladies' Fine Linen Cambric Handkerchiefs, 2/6 per ½-doz.	750 0 0
4,000	Brushes and Combs, in case, 2/- each	400 0 0
4,000	Oval Hand Mirrors, 2/- each	400 0 0
4,000	Photo Frames, 2/- each	400 0 0
38,199		£15,362 0 0

CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION.

The Tablets of WATSON'S MATCHLESS CLEANSER and of NUBOLIC SOAP are enclosed in distinctive wrappers. The prizes will be awarded in the above order to persons who send the largest number of WRAPPERS of either soap or both of them combined to JOSEPH WATSON & SONS Ltd., WHITEHALL SOAP WORKS, LEEDS, not later than October 31st, 1902. Each wrapper must be complete, and each package of wrappers sent will be taken as one lot; separate entries must be sent under separate covers. Full postage or carriage must be paid. Each parcel must contain the full name and address of the sender, and the number of Wrappers sent in must be marked on the same paper. Or, outside of parcel write legibly "Prize Competition." A list giving result of the Competition will be sent with each Prize when it is sent out. Every Wrapper must have been contained soap. No employés of JOSEPH WATSON & SONS Ltd. will be eligible. Should any dispute arise as to the contents of any parcel, or any other matter connected with this competition, the decision of Joseph Watson and Sons Ltd. to be final. All Prizes will be despatched on or before December 20th, 1902.

NUBOLIC SOAP

BEST AND SAFEST DISINFECTANT. For use in Kitchen, Laundry, Bathroom and Nursery. Purifies everything. Kills Infection. Wards off Disease. Saves Doctors' bills.

Hints Of Spring From John Noble Ltd.

NO ANCIENT PATTERNS. EVERYTHING FRESH. THE DESIGNERS' WELL IN ADVANCE SEASON. SCRUPULOUS MAKE FINISH.

JOHN NOBLE LTD. SAVE YOU AT LEAST TWO PROFITS BY MANUFACTURING THE GARMENTS THEMSELVES.

STORE SIZES:

The Stock Sizes of Ladies' Costumes to fit figures 34, 36, 38 ins. round the bust (under arms), and 34, 36, 38 ins. round the waist, the fabric being 36, 40, and 42 ins. long in front. Larger or special sizes up to 46 ins. bust measure, cost 2d. extra.

A Full Dress Length of JOHN NOBLE CHEVIOT SERGE or COSTUME COATING 52 ins. 36 ins. wide) for 7/6; carriage 6d. extra. 7/6

COLOURS.—Black, Navy, Brown, Myrtle, New Blue, Fawn, or Grey.

JOHN NOBLE Ltd. Market St. Mills Manchester

THE JOHN NOBLE PROOFS. Thoroughly waterproof, with middle or long full sleeves, and pockets. Lengths 36 38 40 42 44 ins. 21 26 31 36 41 46 5/- 5/6 6/- 6/6 7/- 7/6 8/- 8/6 9/- 9/6 Carriage 6d. extra.

MODEL 959. Made in John Noble Cheviot Costume Coating. Consists of Skirt and Bodice. Very Best 10/6 for best other fabrics. Trimmed piping. Price for Skirt alone, 5/6. Also in Good Wool throughout, price 21/-

Kindly mention Pearson's Weekly when writing.

MODEL 958. Made in John Noble Serge or Costume Coating, consisting of fashionable and pretty Bodice, trimmed as sketch. Sleeves line 1/- 10/6 complete. Skirt alone, 5/6; Coat in good Wool Serge throughout, price 21/-

Young Ladies' Coat and Skirt Costume, Skirt with deep pleats, coat with small revers and high roll collar, fastened at Chest, Bust, Waist, Hips, Knees, Ankles (Coat lining, taffeta). Lengths and Prices: 28 30 32 34 36 ins. 11/9 12/6 13/6 14/6 15/6 each. Carriage 6d. extra.

SHORT STORIES, 1d. WEEKLY.

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Lind's Cigarettes.

IMMEDIATELY RELIEVES

ASTHMA

WHEEZING & SHORT BREATHING. 50 years success. 2/6 Box 25 Stg. WILCOX, 48, HAYMARKET, S.W. AND ALL CHEMISTS.

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are the Best for Amateurs and Gardeners. They produce the finest Flowers and Vegetables. New Catalogue for 1903 with Sample Packet of Seeds, post free. Write C. R. Shilling, Seedsman, Winchfield, Hants.

ROBINSON & CLEAVER LTD., BELFAST.

And 164, 166 & 170, REGENT ST., LONDON, W.

CAMBRIC Handkerchiefs Direct from the Manufacturers. Samples and Price Lists Post Free. N.B.—To prevent disappointment, inquiries for Samples should be sent direct to Belfast. LINEN COLLARS, CUFFS, HANDKERCHIEFS AND SHIRTS.

SONGS COPIED.

Legibly on paper, 2d. page; transposed correctly, 3d. page. MS. COPIED, Standard Songs, Dances, Instrumental by the Manageress of Waterford, Lady Arthur Hill, Miss Ellen Terry, etc.

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I call talking and singing Phonographs I. You can obtain it free on trial. Then if you decide to keep it, you need pay me 1 shilling weekly, or if you prefer the full price (15s.) in advance payment, we will give you an extra reduced cash price.

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THE GREAT REMEDY FOR

HEADACHE.

Any Chemist or Stores can get it for you. 1½d. per packet of 12 powders. Send stamped addressed envelope for sample.

KAPUTINE Co., SUTTERSWICK RD.

RUPTURED TEN YEARS.

A recent letter from Mr. Joseph Hopkins, Fox Street, Bethnal Green, E., says: "Dear Sirs, I can very highly recommend your Elastic Stocking of the same kind as I have worn in some years, and can do any work with it on. Yours truly, JOSEPH HOPKINS."

"Why pay for false imitations?"

Truss cures in only 28 of thousands. If you want a genuine cure for Rupture, call or send 1d. in stamps for "Rupture Book" to Office Rooms, Elastic Truss Co., 10 Gt. Russell Street, Bloomsbury, W.C. Specialists in Abdominal Supports. Free consultation or by post. Please mention this paper.

THE FAMOUS "Mab" Dwarf Razor

The most Wonderful of all Razors, as the finest shaving implement for the money in the world is certified to by thousands of testimonials. The "Mab" is rapidly superseding the big clumsy razors hitherto used. Do not accept any not bearing the registered Trade Mark "The Mab," or you will be disappointed.

PRICE

Black Handle..2/6
Ivory " ..3/6

PAIR IN CASE,

Black 7/6
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Sent Post Free same day as ordered.

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SYMONS BRASS WIND, STRING, DRUMS, BANJOS, PIANOS, GRAMOPHONES, &c. Exceptional VALUE. From 4/- per Month, or for CASH. Carriage Paid. Catalogue FREE on receipt of Post-card.

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IN WATCHES, JEWELLERY, ELECTRO PLATE, ART POTTERY, LEATHER AND OPTICAL GOODS.

A NEW, NEW, MAGNIFICENT FREE CATALOGUE, JUST PUBLISHED.

WE BRING IT BY OUR ADVANTAGE OUR OFFER IS—OUR OFFER TO YOU. OUT OF EVERY 1s. WE SEND YOU 20s. MAY REDUCE WHEN YOU SEE THE CATALOGUE. SEND TO-DAY!

No. 267.—Gentleman's Watch, 3 rubies, 15s. Carriage 6d.

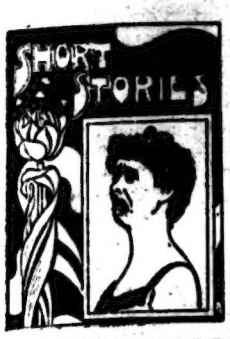
G. MORTON DAVIES & CO., 24 Bennett Street, BIRMINGHAM.

MACKENZIE'S SWEETS

Ask for SOUTOMA. The Famous Sweet. Rich Creamy Centre. 1d., 3d. Sold Everywhere.

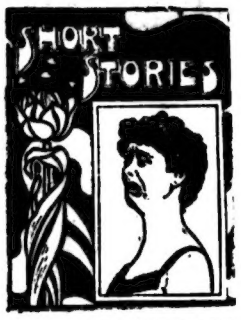
MACKENZIE & CO., Ltd.

This is the first of a series of clever grimaces which appear on the covers of SHORT STORIES. Each photo itself is worth the penny, and the set will form a valuable collection.



PEARSON'S WEEKLY.

TO INTEREST TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE.



No. 606.] TRANSMISSION AT BOOK RATES. WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 27, 1902. ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL. [ONE PENNY.

JUDGE: "We are now going to read you a list of your former convictions."

Prisoner: "In that case perhaps your lordship will allow me to sit down."

"WHAT are you doing?" asked the convict of the reporter, who was writing an account of the prison buildings.

"I'm taking notes."

"Humph! That's what brought me here."

WILLIE'S TREAT.

WILLIE, aged five, had been warned not to eat mince-pie for supper, but insisted on having a piece, nevertheless.

The next morning he related a wonderful dream, in which bears had chased him, snakes had crawled down his back, and a big elephant rolled on him.

"There," exclaimed his mother. "I told you if you ate mince-pie for supper you would have bad dreams."

"Well, I don't care," replied the youngster, "it was better than a circus, anyhow; and I didn't have to pay to get in."

HE THOUGHT IT.

A GUARDIAN of the Law was relating to a small audience how, after arresting a misdemeanant, he was obstructed by another person, whereupon he also arrested the obstructionist.

"What would you have done?" queried a bystander, "if, instead of actually interfering, he had simply spoken his mind, and called you an impertinent, officious, loafing scoundrel, who only loitered about and laid violent hands on his betters—adding that he considered you a vagabond and a blackguard?"

"Oh," replied the policeman, "I would have arrested him all the same for inciting others to commit a breach of the peace."

"But," continued the querist, "suppose he said nothing, but just thought so?"

"Well," was the reply, "I can't arrest a man for thinking. He can think what he likes."

"Then," said the querist, "I think so."

SELLING TOOLS BY PHOTO.

VERY few people have ever given a thought to the fact that photography has saved many thousands of pounds for the benefit of manufacturers, and much hard work on the part of commercial travellers. Every season there are large purchases of travellers' samples at low prices, and those samples have cost the makers a lot of money. Photography has saved a good deal of this outlay by enabling manufacturers to send pictures of their productions instead of the productions themselves, and at the same time it has lightened the burden of the "commercial."

But there are many things which the commercial traveller could not take with him, yet he can sell those goods as well as if he had samples in his bag. Glass goods, earthenware, brass articles, furniture, tools, machinery, and so forth—photography places the traveller in a position to show his merchandise quite easily, although the merchandise itself weigh a ton and be hundreds of miles away. The value of the art in this respect is incalculable.

Commercial photography requires a good knowledge of posing, and more than ordinary skill with the instrument. All the good points must be brought out in the picture; a glass ornament may look very attractive in one picture and quite the reverse in another, so that the sale of the article may be made or marred by the photographer.

VISITOR: "Who is that youngster?"
Editor: "That's our new office boy."
Visitor: "Oh, his face seemed familiar."
Editor: "Perhaps it is, but his manner is more so."

ALPHONSO: "Gwendolyn, why are you so cruel as to keep me waiting for my answer? It is now ten minutes since I asked you to be my wife."

Gwendolyn: "Oh, pardon me. I forgot, I was simply choosing my bridesmaids."

All rights reserved.]

SATURDAY NIGHT.

Placing the little hats all in a row,
Ready for church on the morrow, you know;
Washing wee faces and little black fists,
Getting them ready and fit to be kissed;
Putting them into clean garments and white—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Spying out holes in the little worn hose,
Laying by shoes that are worn through the toes;
Looking o'er garments so faded and thin—
Who but a mother knows where to begin?
Changing a button to make it look right—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Calling the little ones all 'round her chair,
Hearing them lisp forth their sweet evening prayer;
Telling them over that story of old,
How the dear Lord would gather the lambs to His fold;
Watching, they listen with childish delight—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Creeping so softly to take a last peep,
After the little ones are all asleep;
Anxious to know if the children are warm,
Tucking the blankets 'round each little form;
Kissing each little face, rosy and bright—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Kneeling down gently beside the white bed,
Lowly and meekly she bows down her head,
Praying, as only a mother can pray—
"God guide and keep them from going astray."

THE SCENT OF HERRINGS.

THIS has no reference to the odour, appetising or otherwise, that gently insinuates itself all over the house when a succulent bloater is being done to a turn; we are here dealing with the live fish and its power of scenting rough weather.

We are assured by scientists that the humble fish, which has afforded a living to so many hardy seafarers and a dinner to so many persons, can scent the approach of a storm and the direction in which it is coming. They are not credited with being able to see the wind, like the pig, but they can smell nasty weather. Acting on the knowledge obtained through the exercise of this sense, the nimble herring can choose the safest spot to swim in during the storm, either going out to sea or coming very close in to land.

On one occasion the residents round Pegwell Bay saw a shoal of herrings so close that many persons waded in the shallow water and caught fish after fish with their hands. Shortly afterwards a most violent storm raged over the sea and coast, but the inner portion of the Bay suffered least.

BRINGING IT HOME.

MR. WILLIAMS is quite an elderly wealthy gentleman, having for his second wife a lady many years his junior, much petted, and very ignorant of the value of money.

Any expressed wish of hers he at once gratified if money could be the medium. One evening she remarked in her charming way:

"I saw to-day in Regent Street a lovely camel's-hair shawl that I want ever so much. Would you let me have the money to-morrow? It's only £25."

"Yes, dear," he replied, "I will bring the money." And next day, with the assistance of his porter, he did bring home and place on the table 500 shilling pieces.

At the sight of this pile of metal the wife exclaimed:

"What are you going to do with all that money?"

"Why, love, it's the money you wanted for the new shawl."

"Good gracious! does it take all that to make £25? Why, I had no idea it meant so much. I will do without the shawl, and put it all in the bank, if you will let me."

And she did so, and has since added several sums to the deposit. Mr. Williams affirms, on his honour that since the event she has not asked for a quarter so much money as before the incident.

"AH, yes," remarked young Thompson, "old Jones may give a lot of money, but he robbed me of my best chance in life."

"Is that so?" asked Smythe. "How was that?"

"Well, you see, I wanted to marry his only child, and he wouldn't hear of it."

A BOOKSELLER was very much annoyed with a customer continuing to ask the price of articles, evidently with very little intention of becoming a purchaser.

Customer (taking up a box of paper and envelopes): "What does this run about?"

Exasperated Bookseller: "That does not run about, that is stationery."

WHEN EUCLID IS WRONG.

ONE of His Majesty's inspectors stood before a class of seven-year-old boys. The subject of examination was Euclid. After failing several times to draw from the class the definition of parallel lines, he drew two on the wall.

"Now, boys," said the inspector, "I've drawn two parallel lines on the wall. Will they ever meet?"

"Yes, sir," said a small boy.

"When?"

"If you draw them right round the room."

WRITING UP HIS DIARY.

HE was only a little boy, and this was his first diary. It had been given him as a birthday present, and was bound in a red cover with a highly-coloured picture adorning the front.

He meant to begin well and early, so he carefully wrote "Got up at seven." Then, according to instructions, he took it to his governess for approval. The way her eyes dilated and her mouth opened made him feel uncomfortable, and he wondered whether anyone had been tampering with his literary production.

"Got up!" she screamed, "got up! You naughty boy! Does the sun get up? No; it rises."

Very neatly she scratched out the barbarous words and made him write "Rose at seven." This settled Master Tom; no more mistakes of this kind for him again!

So on retiring for the night he wrote, with the air of a man who knew his business well, "Set at eight."

EXPLOSIVE MUSIC.

A CURIOUS experiment was recently tried in the laboratory of a scientific gentleman who is well known in connection with researches on the subject of explosives. Iodide of nitrogen is a highly explosive substance that will "go off" at the least touch, and it was with this substance that the experiment was made.

Some iodide of nitrogen was rubbed on the strings of a bass viol and allowed to dry. It is a peculiarity of this instrument that its strings will vibrate if another such instrument, with the strings at the same tension, is played near it. The scientist accordingly had another bass viol brought into the laboratory and placed near the first; when the strings of the prepared viol were quite dry, he began to play the other.

The strings of the prepared instrument began to vibrate, but it is not till the vibrations reach the rapidity of sixty per second that the trembling is sufficient to affect the iodide. When that rate was reached, the iodide went off in the most approved manner and spoilt the strings. It is curious to note that the G string was the effective one, whereas the E string did not produce enough disturbance to upset the iodide.

YOUTHFUL AUTHOR (who has dropped into the theatre before the performance): "What are you doing, opening all these doors?"

Attendant: "The manager told me that your piece was to be played to-night, and he wanted all exit doors open in case of a panic."

"WHAT brought you here, my poor man?" inquired the prison visitor of a convicted bigamist.

"Well, lady," replied the prisoner, "I think my trouble started from attending too many weddin's."

"Ah! you learnt to drink there, or steal, perhaps?"

"No, lady I was always the bridegroom."

FIVE SHILLINGS A DAY FOR LIFE! A huge prize for a simple task. Particulars later.

COMPLETE SHORT STORY.

TOUCH AND GO.

By John K. Prothero.

The house was very quiet, not a sound not a stir to be heard—and very lonely. Rhoda, the Major's eldest daughter, had gone for a spin on her bicycle, the Major himself was shut up in his "study" with his books, and a bottle of port, and only Estelle was left in the pretty drawing-room. For the past hour time had dragged very slowly. At first she had found amusement in singing some of the songs she had learnt in Paris; but it was tiresome to sing without an appreciative audience, and Mrs. Thomas, over the way, who—so Estelle said—spent her life in inspecting their doings, could not be considered in that light.

How she wished herself back in her beloved France! Why had her Aunt Marie died—her dead mother's sister, who had been in truth a very mother to the heart-broken child? They did not want her here in the little village home; she was one too many. One too many for the small income, the small house, and the smaller interests of her father and step-sister.

The pretty head hung listlessly, and tears veiled the brightness of her soft brown eyes. The silence was oppressive; the girl's young blood refused to accept the dulness of the day. "I shall go out," she decided, and, disregarding Rhoda's parting words, "to be sure and stop at home," she danced off, light-heartedly enough, to get ready. Some impulse—born of her revolt against the hideous regularity of her dull life—made Estelle put on one side the neat black dress, plain almost to dowdiness, that she was wearing, and select her last Parisian toilette.

It was pleasant out in the sunshine, and her spirits rose as she walked rapidly along, enjoying an unwonted sense of freedom.

She suddenly determined to walk to the nearest town, a distance of about five miles, for the sake—as she confessed to herself—of looking at the shops. But she had not taken the roughness of the road into consideration, when she put on her high-heeled shoes, and long before the place was reached she was thoroughly worn out.

The town boasted a bright and cheery little inn, and far too tired to trouble, even if she remembered, that in the eyes of Marplesthorpe she was committing an unpardonable sin against propriety, Estelle found her way to the coffee-room and ordered tea. There was a small party at a table by the window, two ladies and a tall, good looking man, evidently the son of the elder of the two. The women gazed at Estelle with curiosity, the man with undisguised admiration.

"Who can she be, Reggie?" whispered the elder lady. "She has a pretty face, but to dress in such a way down here"—an expressive shrug finished the sentence.

Meantime the girl was contentedly drinking her tea, and trying to fancy herself back in Paris. The gas had been lit, and with a very big effort of the imagination it was possible, with one's eyes half-shut, to dream, if only for an instant, of the Boulevards.

Oddly enough a group of young fellows, evidently students, who had just entered, helped the illusion. That one with the curly hair might just as well have been her cousin Jacques; and how she wished the tall, fair youth would turn so she might see his face.

"Armand!"

"Estelle!"

The man at the window frowned, and the women looked severe; actually the two were embracing, and at an inn!

"You are here in England, and never came to see me? Oh, how could you be so cruel?"

With those pathetic eyes upon him Armand found it difficult to tell that he had written to ask permission to see Estelle, and had been unconditionally refused by Major Rawton.

"I have come over here on a sketching tour," he explained, "we four," with a comprehensive gesture, "and two English students."

It was inexpressibly joyous to Estelle to speak her beloved French once more, and to talk over old times—happy old times, that for most of us live only in an island called Memory. She and Armand had been childish playfellows—indeed, in all but name, they were as brother and sister, and had always exchanged confidences and shared their secrets.

"And how is Lucie?" she asked smilingly.

The mention of his *fiancée's* name was always enough to send the young man into raptures, and so eloquent did he become that Estelle forgot time, her troubles, and all else in listening to his lover rhapsodies. Soon with a sinking heart she remembered the realities of life—life in Marplesthorpe.

"I must go," she said sadly, "it is already late."

But here an unexpected difficulty arose: it was market day, and not a conveyance of any description could be had for love or money. The railway had not reached so far as Marplesthorpe, so there was nothing for it but to walk, and at such a prospect Estelle drew back.

"I simply *can't*," she declared.

"I have it," cried Armand, "you must come with us by train to Kingsthorpe, and there you're sure to get a trap."

The train was unusually full, and she and Armand found themselves separated from the rest, with only just time to jump into a carriage. Her hat fell off in the hurry, and when laughing, though silently confused, she rearranged it, she found her hair had seized the opportunity to come undone, and there was nothing for it but to once again remove the troublesome "Gainsborough," and readjust her wilful locks. It did not add to her comfort to find her movements closely and severely watched by the other occupants of the carriage—the very people who had been sitting in the coffee-room. How dare they look at her like that? How she disliked, hated these country people. A mischievous desire seized her to shock and horrify them. Turning to Armand, she commenced, with a charming air of defiance, to talk the wildest nonsense. Interspersing her speech with slang, both French and English, she mimicked the airs and graces affected by the village prudes, with a side glance at the ladies opposite, and reproduced the redoubtable Mrs. Thomas' expression of shocked surprise in so inimitable a fashion that Rex Newton could not repress a smile, nor his mother a sigh, almost a groan, at such levity.

Finally she finished up by declaring that all the women in Marplesthorpe were frights, and that she hated the people and the place.

"Here we are," cried Armand gaily, and, with a gesture of relief, he helped Estelle on to the platform at Kingsthorpe.

After some trouble he succeeded in chartering a queer sort of vehicle, which its owner called a "gig," and which was apparently most precious in his sight. The next difficulty was a driver, and though willing to pay any price, no one could be found to undertake the job.

Finally, Armand determined to drive himself, and, arranging to meet his chums the following day, he started off, Estelle perched on the box beside him.

At last the house was reached. Darkness reigned supreme, in fact, the only light in the whole street was in the window of the inquisitive Mrs. Thomas, who, as Estelle saw, had hastily drawn back the curtain at the sound of wheels.

"Shall I come in, *chérie?*" asked her companion.

"*Chérie*"—Mrs. Thomas' cap bobbed with excitement, she was not quite sure what it meant, but felt convinced it was improper.

"Best not," said Estelle, "I'm afraid my father would be rude to you. Ring the bell for me, and then you'd better go."

The bell clanged loudly, in the sepulchral fashion peculiar to door bells at a late hour, and it seemed ages before Estelle heard the shuffling footsteps of their old domestic.

Oh, what a dreary, dull life that door would lead to. With a sudden longing for affection she threw her arms round Armand's neck.

"Good-bye, my dear, dear boy," she said, and then, to quote Mrs. Thomas' account of the proceedings, "in the most barefaced way she kissed him!"

* * * * *

Rhoda Rawton was the acknowledged beauty of Marplesthorpe. Other girls might be fair, some might be straight and tall, but no one could lay claim to Rhoda's manifold perfections of face, figure, and style generally.

It was the evening of a dinner party at the Rectory, at which the two sisters were present. Rhoda, perfection itself, in a white silk gown, was a touch more animated than was her wont; may be the fact that Estelle accompanied her was responsible for the pink flush in her cheeks—temper has a rare carmine of its own. To tell the truth, had the elder Miss Rawton had a voice in the matter, Estelle would have been left behind, but the Major, in an unusual fit of good temper, declared she was to go, and, what was more, insisted she should wear one of her Paris frocks.

But once in the chilly, not to say gloomy drawing-room at the vicarage, the girl wished ardently she was at home. Since her escapade she had been regarded in the light of a "terrible example" to those misguided women who sent their girls to France. She was severely let alone in Marplesthorpe society, and in the Vicar's drawing-room, with nothing but the portraits of the Vicar's family to keep her spirits up, looked and felt forlorn.

Presently Estelle became conscious of a slight stir in the room, a fluttering of skirts, and a general softening of voices, and Sir Reginald Newton, a tall, good-looking man, with a slightly bored expression, which lifted for a moment at the sight of Rhoda, entered the room; and then Marplesthorpe had the satisfaction of seeing the catch of the county in interested conversation with its pet *protégée*.

Estelle's first thought on seeing the new comer had been to hide behind the curtains, and utterly refuse to come out; her next was to invent an excuse for going home, but the sight of her step-sister's face effectually choked the idea. Rhoda was looking at her with an expression of dislike, almost of hatred. What could it be? What had she done? With a little gasp she realised the situation. He, Sir Reginald Newton, the man she had seen in the train, was coming towards her with the Vicar's wife. She managed to bow and murmur the few words that conventionality demanded should complete the introduction, and then, feeling very much ashamed, waited for him to speak.

"How's Mrs. Thomas?" he said softly.

That broke the ice at once. In a little while she was telling him all about her life in Paris, and was charmed to find he knew her favourite spots—nay, actually recognised the old house, where she had passed the happiest years of her life. She grew prettier and prettier every minute, and the bored expression vanished entirely from Sir Reginald's face. There was a lull in the conversation among the other guests, and and in the midst of an animated description on Estelle's part of a French actress that she much admired, the voice of Mrs. Thomas struck like a knell upon her ears.

"I assure you, my dear, I saw it myself; anything more flagrant is not to be imagined. She returned home at midnight, and, not content with that, she actually embraced the young man several times before my window. It gave me such a shock I could not sleep."

Estelle stopped short, and Sir Reginald, with a grave look in his eyes, remained silent till he was summoned to take "Miss Rhoda Rawton down to dinner."

* * * * *

It was some three weeks after the dinner that Sir Reginald met the wilful Estelle again.

He had been out shooting all the afternoon, and was sauntering home, when he thought he heard a little cry, and, hurrying his steps, turned in the direction whence it came. At the foot of an old oak sat poor Estelle, her face white and drawn with pain, gazing with piteous eyes at one small foot, which, deprived of its absurdly-fashioned shoe, looked smaller than ever.

"I've sprained my ankle," she said pitifully, and without waiting for his sympathy began to sob in a distressingly heart-broken fashion.

She looked more like a charming child than ever, and Sir Reginald, filled with pity and commiseration, sat down beside her, patted her hand, besought her not to cry, and finally wiped her tears away with his own handkerchief. How it came about he could not say. The end of it was that Estelle finished crying with her head pillowed on his shoulder, and with his arm round her slender waist.

"My darling, I beg of you, don't cry; think how it distresses me, Estelle."

"I'm very sorry," she said, with a little gasp, and then, suddenly alive to the humour of the situation, she went off into a peal of laughter, which discomposed poor Reginald more than her tears.

* * * * *

Rhoda Rawton undoubtedly possessed talents of a high diplomatic order. Her self-control was admirable, her brain was quick and subtle, and her selfishness was extreme. Given the above, with a genius for intrigue, and a woman will go far on the road to attain social if no other success. And the position Rhoda had set herself to gain was that of Lady Newton. The fact that Estelle was engaged to Reginald did not deter her in the least; Estelle was an obstacle to be surmounted, that was all.

Flattery is always a dangerous weapon in the hands of a clever woman who has the power of discovering a man's weak points; in the hands of Rhoda, it proved dangerous in the extreme. Her soft speeches, clever innuendoes, meaning looks, and adroit comparisons aroused a feeling of suspicion in the young fellow's mind, a feeling that in some way or other Estelle had fooled him and that he had fallen a victim to the smiles of as arrant a flirt as ever lived. Estelle felt, without understanding the change, and, poor innocent, took her trouble to her sister, grown suddenly, strangely sympathetic.

"I think, dear, you're just a little impulsive and outspoken," said Rhoda. "Men—Englishmen, at any rate—appreciate a certain reserve in women, I think, perhaps—you won't feel offended, dear—I think perhaps you've been too demonstrative. You shouldn't show just what you feel, dear, it's hardly good form, you know."

Estelle's pride rose up in arms at the suggestion; at her next meeting with Rex she was cold, and "stand-offish" to a degree that maddened and perplexed him.

In his distress he sought the confidence of Rhoda; she, he reflected, was always the same, quiet, helpful, self-restrained.

The misunderstanding between the lovers thus carefully kept alive grew into something deeper; by degrees they drifted farther and farther apart. It was, Rhoda reflected, but a matter of days before there would come an open rupture between them. And then—her pulse beat quicker at the thought. She was playing for a high stake; if she won, it would more than repay her for her pains. But days lengthened into weeks, and weeks grew into months, and still, though they had changed inexpressibly towards each other, neither Rex nor Estelle had determined to end the engagement.

Then Rhoda tried another method of attack. Estelle was engineered to Kingsthorpe for a week-end, which left her sister with a clear field for action, and the action she decided should take place on Sunday evening after church—time usually devoted by the Major to "meditation" in his study.

Rex turned up in response to her invitation. He looked well, and seemed for once alive to the fact that Rhoda was a beautiful woman.

She opened the campaign in a low, almost tearful voice:

"I have to tell you something," she said, "which grieves me very much—for your sake. Estelle wishes to break off her engagement—No—" as he sprang to his feet, hot words on his lips—"No, you must hear me out before you speak. Estelle is young, ignorant of the world, impulsive, heedless, light-hearted as a child, and, like a child, irresponsible. She chafes at the restraint her promise to you imposes, and she longs to be free. I beg you to end this unhappy state of things. For both your sakes it is better. Blame her if you will, but release her."

"You say she wishes this?" he asked.

"Yes, but she has not the courage to say so."

"What do you advise?" he said in a dazed manner.

"Write." She motioned towards her escritoire. "Or, if you prefer, if it would cause you less suffering, leave a message with me, saying that you release her from her word."

"It seems impossible," he said. "I have been angry, and indignant with her, but in my heart I always thought she loved me. I cannot write, no, I cannot write. I will see her," he said. "I will make a last attempt to understand her."

"You are unwise—more, you are cruel. I tell you that Estelle does not love you." Her voice rose almost to a cry. "Yet you will force her to keep her engagement—force her, for she is too weak, too childish to understand your arguments. She will give way, and then——" She breathed heavily and came suddenly towards him.

"Are you blind and deaf?" she cried. "Can you not see Estelle has no love for you? Such affection as she can give she has bestowed already."

"Is that the truth?" he cried; and seized her roughly by the arm. "Do you swear that is the truth?"

"I swear it," she replied unfalteringly. "Her vanity was roused by the thought of your position and your wealth; but as for love——" she broke off, and gazed at him searchingly from her fine eyes.

She came closer, bending towards him, till her breath stirred his hair. "Estelle is not worth your love, she never was. You will set her free?"

"Yes—tell her so."

Rhoda caught her breath, then with a touch of genius she burst into tears, and, blinded with grief, stumbled into Sir Reginald's arms.

"I am so sorry, oh, so sorry for you," she sobbed.

'Twas a critical moment. Rhoda was a beautiful woman and usually self-contained. Her abandonment to grief was the more telling on that account, and Reginald felt strangely stirred. The fair head lay on his shoulder, his arm was loosely yet protectingly about her waist, she raised a tear-stained face to his, he slowly bent towards her. A second, and their lips would meet, and then—— Well, for one thing, this tale would have had a very different ending.

But in a fraction of a minute Rhoda's destiny was altered. The door flew open, and with a suddenness truly dramatic, Estelle came upon the scene.

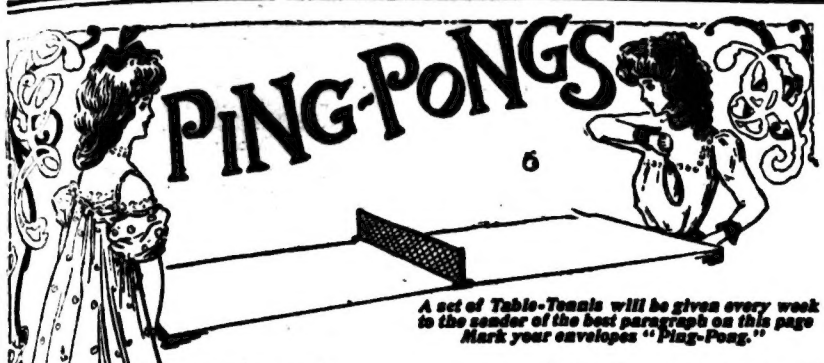
* * * * *

Explanations? Of course, interspersed with tears, and mutual assurances of everlasting fidelity. A complete and thorough understanding was arrived at between the lovers, which the disappearance of Rhoda early in the interview greatly assisted.

Reginald is less vain, and Estelle more equable these days, and of their love for each other there can be no doubt. All things considered, they are very happy.

"Yes," he reflects occasionally, "things turned out all right as it happened; but, by Jove! it was touch and go!"

The Brain Gymnasium—a page of puzzles—is a feature of SHORT STORIES every week.



A set of Table-Tennis will be given every week to the sender of the best paragraph on this page Mark your envelopes "Ping-Pong."

Which One?

President Schwab, of the Steel Trust, once said that he could not help knowing that he was a great man. The fact was brought home to him in a little town not far from Pittsburg. "I had my coloured driver, Bob, sitting beside me," Mr. Schwab said, "and was driving through the town. A woman and a little girl, evidently her daughter, were watching us. 'That's Mr. Schwab,' I could not avoid hearing the mother say. 'Which one?' asked the child."

Put to a Wrong Use.

A certain company in the Town Guard at Capetown was served out with about a couple of dozen yards of flannelette for the purpose of rifle-cleaning. There was no noticeable improvement in the appearance of the rifles, but one fine afternoon one of the members of the company was seen lounging along the beach at Muizenberg smartly attired in a suit of—the flannelette!

Sewer Shrimps.

Shrimp fishing in Paris is a novelty of the day. The fishing grounds are 60ft. below the Opera House, along the embankment of the great Clichy sewer, so as yet these shrimps are not on sale even at the Parisian restaurants which most pride themselves on novelty. Favoured parties are allowed to visit the subterranean stream, where hundreds of shrimps disport themselves gaily in the electric light, and can be easily caught with a hand net.

Why the Tiger Retired.

How entire is the confidence of the native Indian in the Government may be gathered from the following anecdote, which comes from Lahore. A tiger had escaped from the Zoological Gardens, and its keeper, hoping to lure it back, followed it. When all other inducements had failed, he lifted up his voice and solemnly adjured it in the name of the British Government, to which it belonged, to come back to its cage. The tiger, it is needless to add, obeyed at once.

Bread Made While You Wait.

A self-moving flour mill and bakery, to follow regiments on a march, and to make fresh bread every hour with flour ground from wheat obtained by requisition upon the spot, has recently been designed on the Continent. This vehicle is formed of two parts, after the manner of artillery carriages. The first comprises the motor as well as a battery of mills with their bolters, and, alongside of them, the mechanical kneading troughs. All this apparatus is actuated by the motor that is employed to propel the vehicle. A continuous oven is hauled in the rear.

Coffee-Leaf Cigarettes.

One naturally looks in the direction of Paris for the latest in smoking mixtures and cigarettes. Coffee cigarettes are the newest sort of smoke. They are supposed to cure the modern man—or woman—of the so-called nefarious habit. The cigarette is made of the leaf of the tree, not a compound of the ground bean. Coffee-leaf smoking, while absolutely harmless, is said to possess the property of imparting to smokers an intense dislike for the flavour of tobacco. The chemist's shop where these cigarettes may be purchased is having some difficulty in supplying the demand.

Periods of Growth.

Children born between September and February are, some authorities state, not so tall as those born in the summer and spring months, and the growth of children is much more rapid from March till August. The extremities grow rapidly up to the sixteenth year, then there is a slow growth till the thirtieth year. The legs chiefly grow between the tenth and seventeenth years. Comparing the general results, it appears that there are six periods of growth. The first extends up to the sixth or eighth year, and is one of very rapid growth; the second period, from eleven to fourteen years, growth is slow; the third period, from sixteen to seventeen; the fourth period shows a slow growth up to the age of thirty for height, up to fifty for chest girth; the fifth period is one of rest, from thirty to fifty years; the sixth period is characterised by a decrease in all dimensions of the body.

Witchcraft in Britain.

A belief in witchcraft still exists in some rural districts, though the people who hold it are sometimes shy of confessing the same, lest they should incur the ridicule of their more enlightened neighbours. Not long ago an old woman died who was popularly credited with the power of being able to assume any form she liked. She lived in a wretched hut built on a strip of waste land, and her favourite pastime was that of masquerading under the guise of a hare. One day a coursing match was held in the fields near her cottage, when one of the greyhounds seized a hare, which, however, contrived to escape, at the cost of a gaping wound in its flank. Shortly afterwards the old woman died, and when she was laid out a similar wound was found in her side, which was proof positive, the rustics affirmed, that she and poor puss were identical!

Boots' Little Joke.

During the races at a certain northern town, a gentleman returned to his hotel for lunch, and seeing Boots, who had been commissioned to wait at table in the absence of one of the waiters, exclaimed: "Why, you here, Boots, I thought you were at the races." "So I am, sir; so I am," replied Boots with a grin. "Don't you see me running for the plates and steaks!"

"Egyptian" Tobacco.

Probably few smokers of Egyptian cigarettes trouble themselves greatly where the tobacco they enjoy comes from, and if asked would answer, "Egypt, of course." As a matter of fact, however, practically no tobacco is grown in Egypt, as the soil is too sandy; almost all of it comes from Turkey, though the manufacture of the best qualities of leaf tobacco into cigarettes, for foreign and for Turkish consumption, is carried on almost exclusively in Egypt, and the paper is made in the same country.

Operating Room in a Balloon Car.

The Scientific Committee of the Paris Aero Club is preparing an important series of surgical experiments to be made at various heights. Special balloon cars are to be fitted with all the essentials of an operating room. Various problems of heart action under anæsthesia and subsequent recuperation are to be worked out. The first subjects will be guinea-pigs and a dog.

Only Lady Policeman.

There is in the world one lady policeman. Miss Helen Wilder did not become a member of the police force of the city of Honolulu in order to gain a living. Her father is one of the great sugar kings of the Pacific and worth several millions. It was her love for children and animals that prompted this pretty young girl (she is now only twenty-four) to seek the appointment. She is a mounted officer, wears on her soft felt hat the silver star which is the badge of her calling, and carries a revolver.

A Good Answer.

To Mr. MacNeill is due the credit for the first "bull" of the session. "Then when will the heliogram correspondence be published?" demanded the persistent Irishman. Loyal Ministerialists endeavoured to shout him down, but Mr. MacNeill, raising his voice to a scream, changed their wrath to mirth by challenging Mr. Brodrick to give him a "Yes" or "No" answer. "All I ask, Mr. Speaker," he explained with dignity, "is that to my simple question, 'When will the correspondence be published?' I should have a plain 'Yes' or 'No.'"

A Goldfish Farm.

One of the many curious industries which have sprung up in the United States is the rearing of goldfish. At one of the farms near Cincinnati there are six large ponds, each containing between 40,000 and 50,000 fish. A careful watch has to be maintained against the natural enemies of the fish, such as snakes, musk-rats, dragon-flies, turtles, kingfishers, and minks. The fish are "shipped" in galvanised iron cans, each of which holds 150. The rarest and most valuable species is the paradise fish, sold at four shillings the pair.

How to Mend Ping-Pong Balls.

The cost of ping-pong may be minimised by an ingenious method of restoring damaged balls which an enthusiast in the game has discovered and made public property. The celluloid balls commonly used are often bulged in, and then thrown away as useless. Instead of throwing them away, they should be dipped into very hot water, when the bulge will immediately disappear, and the ball can be returned to play as good as ever. It is not necessary to immerse the whole ball. It is sufficient if the bulged part be dipped, and this can be done without scalding the fingers.

Madame Patti's Parrots.

The parrots belonging to Madame Patti are a source of constant amusement to everyone near them, and there could not be a greater contrast, for, while one talks and sings all day long, imitating its mistress' trills in a weird, thin voice, the other is constantly silent. The former only cost £21 and the latter £200, for he was represented to be the finest talking parrot alive. However, when Patti brought him to England—he was bought abroad—he refused to utter a word. Only once since has he broken the silence; then Madame Patti had sent for a doctor to examine her throat, and when the medico entered the room Jumbo is credited with having exclaimed, "Oh, doctor, I am so sick." Madame Patti says that the two parrots are very devoted to each other.

A Rolling Stone.

In a recently published book on the war the author describes one of the irregular regiments in these words: "A rough crowd are the 2nd Brabants, amongst them adventurers drawn from every quarter of the globe—Poles, Jews, Texan cowboys, Mexicans, Norwegians and Swedes, and, of course, many Dutch. Here is the life history of one of these troopers: Born in Belgium, when nine years old he emigrated to the United States with his parents. Drifting into Texas, he, when old enough, became a cowboy. But he was a true rolling stone, and had been found wherever the clash of arms was heard. He had taken part in nine South American revolutions. The Spanish-Cuban war proved irresistible, and he fought on the Cuban side until the Americans landed, when he joined and fought with his old companions, the cowboy 'Rough Riders,' until the conclusion of the war. Then came the South African war, and he and twenty more, taking their high-peaked saddles, at once crossed the Atlantic and threw in their lot with Brabant's Horse, in whose ranks, having been once severely wounded, he was still enrolled."

Did His Best.

A soldier of the Black Watch, while passing a private of the Bushmen regiment, stepped heavily, and perhaps intentionally, upon the foot of the latter. Up sprang the "Bushie." "You stepped on my foot," he hissed menacingly. "Well," said the Highlander apologetically, "I did ma best tae leap over it, but a Hielan' mon is only human. I'm nae a kangaroo." A fierce battle immediately ensued.

Proposed New Royal Bodyguard.

The Government are considering the desirability of establishing a Royal bodyguard of native Indian Cavalry, to be quartered in London. If an affirmative decision should be come to Sir Pertab Singh, of Jodhpur, who has been appointed aide-de-camp to the King, will be commander. Sir Pertab is well known in London society, where he has become an established favourite.

Teetotal Societies Illegal.

Few teetotallers know that there is still in existence an old law, which declares that a society of total abstainers which makes "taking the pledge" a condition of admission is an illegal confederacy, and its members are liable to seven years' penal servitude, unless it be either registered as a friendly society, or the pledge be taken in a form approved by justices of the peace.

Given Away.

A minister in Midlothian, who was making a call the other week upon a member of his flock, whom he had not seen at church for some time, asked: "What's come over you that I don't see you at church at all now?" "Hoots, man, ye'll no' ha' seen me because I sit ahint the pillar." "The pillar, John? Good gracious, the pillar! Why, it is two years since it was removed from the front of your seat."

Coronation Clubs.

It is a sign of the times to find "Coronation" clubs are being instituted throughout the busiest of London districts. The cue has been taken up by the clothiers and linen-drapers of the poorer parts. By entering at once, and punctually paying sixpence or so per week, either a man or woman can insure new garments for wear on the eventful day of the approaching ceremonial. Some one or two have a provisional rule to the effect that should a member desire to withdraw from the club they are at liberty to do so, and have the privilege of securing goods to the amount they have already subscribed, but no cash will be returned.

A Poaching Story from Shropshire.

On one of the largest game preserves in Shropshire, a wooden shelter has been erected for the benefit of the gamekeepers in rough weather. A few evenings ago three of these gentlemen entered the shelter, leaving the hanging lock, with key inserted, on the outside. No sooner were they inside than the "enemy," who had been carefully watching their movements, emerged, and, advancing to the door, quietly adjusted the lock and turned the key. By the time the infuriated keepers had succeeded in forcing the door—which for obvious reasons was very strongly built—the birds—of more than one kind—had flown.

Prison Duty by Deputy.

A Romainville woman, named Carat, last year prevailed upon a simple-minded Breton woman to undergo in her place a sentence of four months' incarceration in the prison at Nanterre, promising her fifty francs per month by way of recompense. When the four months expired the Breton substitute expected her release, but was told that she would be detained for a further six months, to fulfil a previous sentence passed upon the woman Carat. The former then disclosed to the prison officials the illegal bargain which had been made, and she was set at provisional liberty, while the police are now making search for Mme. Carat.

They Needed the Light.

In a certain town there is a fire brigade composed wholly of volunteers. Not long ago a fire broke out in the town at midnight, and the volunteer firemen were quickly upon the spot. The smoke was rising in heavy clouds out of the building, but no flame appeared, and the night was very dark. Presently a tongue of flame shot out of one corner of the building, and the crowd cheered as the man at the nozzle directed a stream of water towards it. But at this crisis the excited captain interfered. "Be careful what you're doing, man!" he shouted. "Keep the water off that blaze! Don't you see that's the only light we've got to put the fire out by?"

A Nice Sort of Girl.

Paris boasts some of the most audacious thieves in the world, but a robbery just carried out at Vincennes, near Paris, was really a masterpiece. A handsome, well-dressed young woman knocked at the door of a villa, and begged protection from the master against three evil-looking men whom she declared were following her. The gentleman readily complied, and escorted the lady almost to the house where she said she lived. What was his surprise on returning home to find his house had been entered and thoroughly ransacked during his absence. It is fully believed by the police that the woman was acting in concert with the men, as no one answering to her description lived at the address given.

A New Australian Industry.

Australian meat we know, Australian wheat we know, but it will come as a surprise to most people in this country to learn that tobacco is a product of the Australian soil. It is, however, and the industry is likely to develop considerably in the near future. The plant has been grown in one or two of the States for some years, but more as a hobby, and the limited production has been disposed of locally. Recently, however, more serious consideration has been given to the raising of the "weed" in the State of Victoria, and the results have been eminently satisfactory. It has been found that the soil is exceptionally favourable to the plant, and the prospect is regarded as exceedingly promising. The first consignment was placed on the English market a short time ago. The tobacco is said to compare very well with that grown in Virginia, and its success is practically assured.

FIVE SHILLINGS A DAY FOR LIFE! A huge prize for a simple task. Particulars later.

QUESTIONS WORTH ANSWERING

Half-a-crown is paid for every Question used, and two guineas a column for Replies.

REPLIES.

FLOWERS THAT SHINE.

Are there any Flowers that are Luminous? (5938.)

Yes, several, but mostly those of a green or an orange hue, such as the sunflower, nasturtium, marigold, arum, poppy, orange lily, tuberose, chrysanthemum and evening primrose. One, the Bastard Dittany even gives off an inflammable vapour which burns with a bright flame. The cause has not been satisfactorily determined, but, in the case of fungus plants, there is no doubt that the phosphorescence which they sometimes give off is due to bacteria.

"CAPE TO CAIRO."

Which Trade will Benefit most by the Completion of the Cape to Cairo Railway? (5940.)

Generally speaking, the answer would be the carrying trade between Central Africa and the coast and rivers by means of connections with the existing caravan routes. Of special trades the first that will develop will probably be that in ivory. It will tap vast districts into which the hunter has scarcely penetrated, and, in addition, it is known that there are enormous stores of ivory in Africa, especially the central portions, which would be brought into the market by a comparatively easy and cheap means of transport. Another trade that would undoubtedly be stimulated is that in india-rubber. The railway would open up very large areas suitable for the growth of the rubber tree, and, as the present supply barely equals the demand, this might probably be one of the most important effects of the railway.

MALARIA.

How would the Abolition of Malarial Fever Affect the World's History? (5941.)

It would make many a spot now practically uninhabitable to the white man a very paradise. This sudden addition of desirable dwelling places would awaken a desire for possession in the hearts of many of the over-crowded European nations, and the result might very possibly be strained relations, if not war. Fever-stricken as it is at present the West Coast of Africa has caused more than one dangerous misunderstanding between great Powers, and if the fever there were abolished it is more than probable that these misunderstandings would be greatly intensified, and might prove the match that would set Europe in a blaze, and bring about the universal war that many think inevitable.

The deadly valley of the Zambesi would become a most valuable possession, and Portugal might again rise into importance in consequence, or it might be sought after by other countries, and lead to dangerous complications. Great Britain would be an immense gainer, for we possess much fever country, and what would be of greater importance to us, we should no longer lose some of our most promising men from this dread disease year by year. This country would become stronger, and it is no idle boast to say that, therefore, the world would enjoy greater freedom and prosperity.

ONSU MPTION AND IMMORTALITY.

What Medical Discovery would Most Nearly Revolutionise the World? (5942.)

In the domain of what may be called practical therapeutics the most important discovery would certainly be such a preventive of consumption as vaccination is of small-pox. If it were possible to render the human body as immune against the ravages of the bacillus of consumption as can now be done against that of small-pox, there is no reason to believe that the mortality from consumption, which in civilised countries nearly equals that from all other diseases, would be reduced in something like the same proportion as that from small-pox has been.

This would produce most important national and international results. For instance, France, with her diminishing population, loses a hundred and fifty thousand lives from consumption every year, considerably more than her annual decrease from other causes. Therefore, a protective agent against consumption would give France an increasing instead of a decreasing population. In other countries population would tend to increase more rapidly than it does, and this would lead to greater stress of competition and a consequent development of colonising enterprise. It must also be remembered that, as a rule, the victims of consumption are highly developed and intellectual. It has even been called "the disease of genius." From this it follows that it is responsible for a very large and steady decrease of the world's intellectual power.

There is another discovery, at present in the air to some extent, said to have been made by a Russian Professor at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. This gentleman is believed to have discovered that there is no physiological reason why healthy people should die of old age. He maintains that the vital cells can be restored and protected from senile decay by a treatment which is now under examination. Should this prove to be a scientific fact it will entirely revolutionise human affairs, since no person who is organically sound need die so long as he or she could afford to pay for the treatment. It is to be hoped that the Professor is mistaken, for a world governed by millionaires who could live as long as they wanted to would scarcely be the sort of place that any other person would care to live in.

OUR MOST PROFITABLE SPORT.

Which Sport is Most Useful to Mankind? (5943.)

All things considered, the answer would probably be yachting. Not only is an enormous amount of money spent in their building and maintenance and the keep of their crews, but the constant competition of yacht-builders has developed the art of shipbuilding, upon which, to a great extent, the communications of the world depend. In fact, all our fastest sailing ships and steamers are built on lines discovered by yacht builders.

Horse racing has, of course, done a good deal for the improvement of horses of a certain class, but the tendency to sacrifice everything to speed has in late years discounted this advantage to a great extent. Added to this, the social abuses connected with the sport are so great that they almost counterbalance the solid advantages of horse racing.

In the near future, the most important sport for all countries which have possible enemies near at hand will undoubtedly be rifle shooting. The South African War has conclusively proved that in modern warfare the rifle is the dominating factor, and it is quite certain that a country in which every man is a marksman will be practically impregnable to invasion.

ANIMALS THAT CHANGE COLOUR.

Is it a Fact that Chameleons and Other Animals which Change Colour to Suit their Surroundings cannot do so if Blinded? (5944.)

This is true so far as back-boned animals are concerned, such as fish, frogs, and chameleons. Trout, for example, gain protection by becoming light or dark according to the colour of their surroundings, and in chalk districts, where a light tint is assumed, blackish creatures are sometimes seen, which, on examination, invariably prove to be blind. The same thing is true of frogs and chameleons which have lost the power of sight, in which case they remain of a blackish hue. These colour changes are due to the alteration in size of microscopic colour-bodies in the skin, which contain different pigments. When these contract a light shade is produced, and when they expand, a dark one, the variations in size being controlled by the nervous system according to the impressions received by the eye from the surroundings.

Among lower animals the skin itself is the part acted on by the light. A good example is found in the quiescent or chrysalis stage of the small tortoiseshell butterfly, which is light, dark, or gilded, according to the nature of the objects which surround the caterpillar at the time when it is about to become a chrysalis. If the eyes of the caterpillar are at this time covered with opaque varnish it makes no difference to the tint of the chrysalis.

THE ANCESTORS OF THE WHALE.

Why is it Probable that Whales were Originally Amphibious Animals? (5945.)

Because they are true mammals, cetacea, being, indeed, regarded by Albrecht and others as nearest the pro-mammalia, the assumed progenitor from which all mammals, originally land animals, are believed to have sprung. The available evidence on the subject suggests that like the seal, sea lion, dugong and manatee, whales are an offshoot from an early group of higher mammals, being, it is thought, descended from some terrestrial ancestor, probably an ungulate.

The rhytina, or Steller's sea cow, which became extinct about 1770, offers the best example of an intermediate incomplete form half-way between the purely terrestrial and the totally aquatic whale; being, in short, an amphibious whale frequenting the estuaries of ocean rivers in South America. In cetacea we see the adaptation to aquatic life complete, and the flukes forming the tail—in which some detect the degenerate equivalent of two hind limbs—the scanty hair now found only on the upper lip, and the absence of external ears and even ear muscles are evidence of changes effected naturally, it is held, during the period and process of adaptation.

FIRST COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

Which was the First European Country to Establish Compulsory Universal Education? (5946.)

The first of all was, of course, Sparta, where every child as soon as it was independent of maternal care was taken over by the State and educated physically and intellectually with the sole object of making it an efficient citizen. In the case of boys, the chief purpose was to turn him into a good fighting man. In comparatively modern times, Saxony established the first system of national education. This was made universal in 1805, but three years previously, in 1802, Napoleon had made universal education compulsory in France.

In 1793, Frederick the Great of Prussia introduced a system of compulsory attendance at school throughout his dominions, but it was rather nominal than actual. The first country that really had an efficient system of compulsory education was Germany. Denmark introduced the system in 1814. The last two countries to adopt the system were Holland and England, which made education compulsory in 1878.

THE BEST ARMY TO SERVE IN.

Which of the Military Services of the World Offers the Best Chances of Quick Promotion and High Reward? (5948.)

In no service was promotion ever so rapid as in that of France during the Napoleonic wars. It was then perfectly true that the private soldier did carry a marshal's bâton in his knapsack. For instance, in about ten years Bernadotte, who enlisted as private, became not only a Marshal of France, but King of Sweden as well. In fact, nearly all Napoleon's commanders rose from the ranks.

In the present day promotion is quickest, and rewards for military services are highest in the British Army. The reason for this is that we alone of European nations have some sort of war always going on, and, therefore, there is always a chance for the best men to come to the front. The three most conspicuous examples of this fact are Earl Roberts, Lord Kitchener and Sir Hector Macdonald.

"CHOKE" AND "CYLINDER."

Upon what does the Superior Hitting Power of the Choke-Bore Gun Depend? (5950.)

The choke-bore, as distinguished from the cylinder barrel, differs in having about an inch of its length contracted slightly at the muzzle, whereas the other is of equal bore all through. The effect of the "choke" is to confine the gases produced by the explosion of the powder a little longer in the barrel and to concentrate the charge of shot into a smaller space. Therefore, the net results are a more perfect combustion of the powder, a greater impact on the charge of shot, a higher muzzle velocity, and, therefore, what is technically termed "closer shooting." This is why a choked barrel can generally be depended on up to about ten or fifteen yards more than the cylinder.

QUESTIONS.

5971. Saving the precious metals, which is now the most costly commercial commodity?
5972. Has re-vaccination any effect on diseases other than small-pox?
5973. To which town in Great Britain would a river navigable for 1,000-ton ships be of most value?
5974. In which waters are the fastest swimming fishes found?
5975. Why were the first London theatres outside the City?
5976. Has a nation, once civilised, ever relapsed into barbarism?
5977. Have chimneys ever been taxed in this country?
5978. When did "affectionate" mean the exact reverse of what it does now?
5979. Which Government official in the British Isles performs the most varied functions?
5980. Which was the earliest academy of painting?

CONDITIONS.

We shall be glad to receive from our readers replies to any of the questions asked here. Each reply must bear the writer's name and address. We shall print a selection of replies to each question, and shall pay at the rate of £2 2s. a column for all matter printed. The same reader may send replies to any number of queries, whether his own or not. Envelopes should be marked "Replies" in the top left-hand corner, and answers to the questions in any issue of the paper must reach us by first post on the Monday of the week following that for which the paper is dated. Payment will only be made for replies published. Authorities on which replies are based must be given where possible. Half-a-crown will be paid on publication for every question received which is considered worthy of insertion.

Fashionable Young Lady: "If I give you some money will you promise to go and take a bath?"

Beggar: "A bath! And is it a mermaid you take me for?"

Fred: "But, my darling, I would work hard, and eventually fortune would crown my efforts."

Mab: "Thanks! but I prefer an heir to a castle to a castle in the air."

"What will happen to you if are are a good little boy?" asked the kindly old lady.

"I'll get a sugarstick."

"And what will happen to you if you are bad?"

"I'll get two sugarsticks for promising to be good."

Mrs. Goodsole: "Why, Johnny, are you just going home now? Your mother's been looking for you all the afternoon."

Johnny: "Yes'm, I know."

Mrs. Goodsole: "Just think how worried she must be."

Johnny: "Oh, she's near the end o' her worryin'. I'm jest beginnin' mine."

Founded 1871.

The OCEAN Accident and Guarantee Corporation Ltd.

(Empowered by Special Act of Parliament.)

Capital Authorised £1,000,000 | Income, 1900 £878,492
Capital Subscribed £511,485 | Reserves Dec. 31st, 1900 £921,417
Funds, 31st Dec., 1900 (excluding Uncalled Capital), £1,164,[illegible]

The "Advanced" Policy of The Ocean Corporation is a remarkable development from the old-fashioned Accident contract, with its limited scope and restrictive conditions. The "Advanced" Policy is based on wide and liberal lines, and not only provides against Accidents, but also against Illness and Permanent Incapacity. It possesses, in addition, the important advantage of being World-wide as to Travel.

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On the cover of SHORT STORIES next week you will see how pretty the girl with the ugly grimace really is.

AWAKE or asleep, ill or well, rich or poor, you have millions upon millions of gallant redcoats fighting for you, living for you, yea, dying for you. That you may live, thousands of these plucky soldiers lay down their lives ungrudgingly, and there are none to do them reverence.

You are astonished! Who, what are these soldiers? Where are the mighty battles fought, and against whom?

Now you shall know.

These warriors, though tough and wiry, are small, very small. It would take 3,500 of them stood on top of each other to make a column of but an inch in height, but yet they can fight, and do fight until the last one dies. There is no white flag business. Their battles are fought to the death. "No surrender!" is their cry.

They take no prisoners; they neither give nor ask quarter. When they fight, the weaker, be it they or the enemy, is exterminated. Oh, they're terrors. They may be little, but they know how to fight.

Where do you think these little fellows live and die? Why in your body in your blood. It is they who make that blood red.

Really the blood itself is a nearly colourless fluid. It consists of water in which a number of substances are dissolved, such as albumen, fatty matter, fibrine, and salt. It is the fibrine which makes the blood clot, and so stops up gashes and the like. The albumen and the fatty matter build up the body, and go to make repairs, but the heaviest part of the work is done by the solid matter which floats in the fluid.

WHERE THE SOLDIERS LIVE.

This solid portion is made up of a vast number of tiny flat particles, or globules, of which there are two kinds, the white and the red. The white ones are twice as big as the red ones, but there are four hundred of the latter to each one of the former. After a meal the proportion is as much as a thousand to one.

It is the red ones, let us call them the red corpuscles, which are our gallant little defenders. They do the work. The white corpuscles are no good as fighters, indeed, if the little red fellows are not in sufficient force, and are being vanquished, the white ones yield not the least assistance. They themselves, however, increase vastly in numbers, in such a case. This being so, we will not bestow another thought upon them.

Our gallant little friends have ever so much hard work to do in carrying fresh air all over our bodies, and in generally acting as hewers of wood and drawers of water. We will leave all this hard work out of consideration, and will think only of their fighting deeds.

Now for the enemy, our deadly enemy. It consists of roving bands of desperadoes, of vile murderers ever watchful of chances to do us injury. This enemy is ever at our gates, waiting to creep in. It is ever at our walls, trying to make a breach. So long as we keep a strong guard of our red friends, we can laugh the enemy to scorn.

We are surrounded by disease germs, or microbes, as our foes are commonly termed. These foes differ much in virulence, and they are of many tribes and nations. You know many of them, by repute at any rate, such as the consumption germs, the diphtheria germs, the influenza germs, the small-pox germs.

HOW THE BATTLES ARE FOUGHT.

Their hosts are almost innumerable, and their names are often almost as fearful as themselves. You talk glibly of having caught a cold. What you mean is that the micrococcus catarrhalis gangs have caught you. When the little red fellows have slaughtered these gangs, you tell people that you have thrown off your cold.

When you say that your hair is losing its colour, you mean that the pigmentophage tribe has stormed it, and is eating up all the colouring matter. The same thing is true of all your ailments, the enemy is fighting for supremacy, and the little lads in red are dying for your sake.

Here is a sketch of one of these fearful fights to the death:

By some mischance you cut your skin, scratch it with a pin, we will say. Instantly results a hecatomb.

The hordes of watching microbes rush to storm the breach. They have lain sneaking about the dirt on the pin point, have crawled round and round your finger, have lain in wait for long with a never-tiring astuteness, with a never-wearying vigilance. Their chance has arrived; they make full use of it.

Fiercely, mercilessly, they pour through the breach, overpowering the small guard of defenders. Woe unto you if the guardian troops have not been kept up to full standard.

The instant the breach is made a message is sent to headquarters for help. It arrives at once. Without delay regiment after regiment of red corpuscles are dispatched to the seat of war. Packed deep they rush on the foe, backed up by a steady body of reinforcements.

Then comes the mighty battle. The carnage is terrible, and ends only when the last microbe is slain, slain and eaten, for the victorious army gobbles up the losers. When the defenders are present in strong enough numbers all goes well.

This is what actually happens. You may not be aware of it, but the battle is always a sore one when your finger grows hot in the region of the scratch. More complex battles are of constant occurrence. Ever warring, ever struggling, our gallant little warriors do noble service for us.

Fortunately, we have found some powerful allies for these hard-worked friends of ours. These new allies bid fair to strike terror in the ranks of the dreadful enemy, and are called anti-toxins.

Curiously enough, these allies were originally members of the microbe family, microbes who went in for high living, such as feeding upon beef broth.

Anti-toxin, or serum, is made from a powerful or virulent toxin. Toxin, by the way, is simply another name for poison. Disease germs are grown in flasks of broth, and they form a poison which dissolves in the fluid.

THE RED SOLDIERS' ALLIES.

This toxin is injected into a strong, sound horse, in doses which gradually increase until the animal can bear enormous quantities without being affected. This is due to the fact that the toxin is turned into anti-toxin, and it is this anti-toxin which is so antagonistic towards microbes, but only towards such as are members of its own family.

The horse's blood is drawn off as wanted, and the clear portion is used to assist our red friends in the big battles. There is one terrible foe, however, which laughs at the new allies. This hostile army is the one made up of consumption germs.

Vast armies of different kinds of serum have been brought against this fell enemy, but they all have been annihilated. The victorious foe is a terrible one, but some day we shall find an army of serum which will back up the red guard and vanquish the hateful army. Till then we must intrust ourselves to those tiny warriors with whom good food supplies us in plenty.

SOME EMPTY PHRASES.

The girl may have hinted she'd like to essay
Some ballad or similar thing,
She may have suggested she'd like to display
How clearly her upper notes ring.
But when she's invited it's proper to say
"She kindly consented to sing."

The youth may have pleaded with voice and with pen
For someone to give him "a show,"
He ne'er "gets a job" though appealing to men
With tales of his worth and his woe,
But, give him a chance, he complacently then
"Accepts a position, you know."

To pose as a patroness may be the aim
Of a dame on pre-eminence bent.
Though tricks that she tries in this popular game
May clearly reveal her intent,
You'll notice when asked for the use of her name,
"She graciously gives her consent."

WHERE IT CAME IN.

"MR. MAPLES," said the junior partner of the house, as he looked over the expenses account of one of his new travellers. "Your expenses are just five pounds more for two weeks than the last man on that road."

"Is that so? What sort of a man was he?"

"One of our best salesmen."

"Did he smoke or drink?"

"He did."

"Stop at all the best hotels?"

"Yes."

"Travel first-class?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, it must be that when he hit upon that grocer in Exeter he won five pounds at nap where I lost it. I was going to suggest to you that if I am to remain on that road it would pay the firm to hire someone to give me a few lessons."

A LITTLE fellow had been seriously lectured by his mother, and finally sent into the garden to find a switch with which he was to be punished. He returned soon and said:

"I couldn't find a switch, mamma; but here's a stone you can throw at me."

"THEN, when you have finished your lecture," said the professor of elocution and deportment to young Dulle, "bow gracefully, and leave the platform on tiptoe."

"Why on tiptoe?" queried Dulle.

"So as not to wake the audience," replied the professor.

WHY I DON'T PLAY GAMES.

BY THE CANTANKEROUS CRANK.

[N.B.—This Contributor has never been known to think the same as anyone else on any subject.—EDITOR.]

THERE are three reasons why I do not play games. One is because I am fond of sport; another, that I have a light, jovial temperament; and the third, because life is, at best, confoundedly short. For a person of such a disposition to have the effrontery to thrust himself into the sober, thoughtful, dignified ranks of devotees of games, would be little short of sacrilege.

Sport is ruined by games. When a thing ceases to be a diversion and becomes a study, it is no longer sport. And every game in Britain is now a study.

Not long ago, certain philosophers discovered that a ball could be banged across a table by two people, with sticks attached to a surface of vellum. The person who banged the ball, if he banged it so that the other person could not bang it back, scored a point. It was a great discovery, and a distinguished musical critic, who was sitting by when the first game was played, in a moment of inspiration exclaimed "Ping-pong." He said that was the musical term which expressed the sounds produced by the ball-banging.

Now, banging that ball across a table was a nice quiet after-dinner recreation. I can quite conceive myself strolling into the next room and having a bang or two myself, for a quarter of an hour or so. It would please me and interest me. I said I was a sportsman. In the same way I throw little pebbles into the sea and watch them skip about. It is pleasant both for the mind and the body.

But that is not the British idea of sport. Directly that man discovered this great secret of ping-pong, which has remained dormant throughout the ages, Britain arose. There must be a code of rules, she said, with a majestic sweep of her hand. And, in no time, the brain of the nation set to work to draw up such a code which should govern that ball banging. The framers of the rules discovered all sorts of nice little points which might arise. They found out that you could hold your racquet in fifty different ways. They analysed every square inch of the table, and with diagrams and dotted lines found out all sorts of things the ping-pong player ought not to do. In no time, ping-pong became a great study, fraught with mathematical possibilities, and it will soon be impossible to keep it out of the school books.

From that moment, my interest in ping-pong died. I said I liked banging a nice little ball about with a nice little racquet. But if you expect me to master fifty treatises before I handle a racquet, I can't.

In the same way, I like putting cards down on tables, and seeing if they are going to be higher than other people's cards. That is a game. But being of a light, jovial disposition (as anyone can see who reads my articles) I cannot go to a whist party. Being a mere lover of a game, what business have I amongst such intellectual giants as congregate at such parties? I am unworthy to touch the hem of their garments.

I had a very pleasant Christmas, thank you. Why? Because I played no games whatever. I just sat about and smoked, and talked. On my Christmas cards, I added the words "Christmas Parties Declined with Thanks," and so got no invitations. I had seriously thought of escaping the possibility of being asked out, by going to Monte Carlo, which is the safest place of refuge from games. They do indulge in a mild form of diversion at that resort, it is true, which is a pleasant relief from games. The utter impossibility of introducing any method into the Monte Carlo game makes it about the only thing a real sportsman can now play.

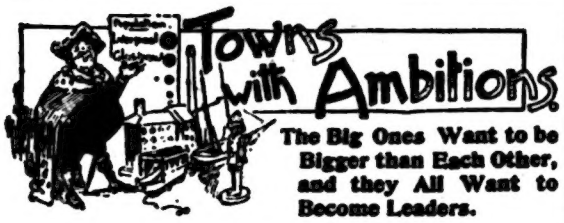
Draughts at one time had an interest for me. I thought it was a mere matter of pushing circular pieces of wood, and hopping over other pieces of wood. I liked the thing. But somebody once told me that it was a great scientific game, and that every move had some definite significance to a good player. From that moment I never touched a draught piece.

I used to do a bit of boxing at one time. My sporting instinct showed me how great was the fascination of hitting someone else's face and getting my own hit in return. I used to go at it hammer and tongs fashion, and thoroughly enjoyed the thing. Then someone told me I was unscientific, and knew nothing about the art of boxing. He showed me that the method of blacking another man's eye adopted my me, was against all known canons of the pastime. Thus I could not even smite someone else's cheek without an encyclopædia. So I dropped boxing.

No man can nowadays enjoy a quiet wheel along a country road without having previously resolved himself into an engineer in practice and theory. No cyclist who cannot talk of brakes, free-wheels, gear-cases, tyres, and who has not at some time or another made himself dirty in the pursuit of knowledge of these matters is regarded as a cyclist nowadays. As for motoring, the possibilities in that direction are worse.

All that a true sportsman can do now is to throw little pebbles into the sea when no one is looking to criticise his method, do a bit of al fresco boxing with the nocturnal Hooligan, or knock the heads off plants with a walking-stick in country lanes. Every other pastime is now in the hands of the scientists.

FIVE SHILLINGS A DAY FOR LIFE! A huge prize for a simple task. Particulars later.



The Big Ones Want to be Bigger than Each Other, and they All Want to Become Leaders.

DEESIDE was jubilant; it was blowing its own trumpet.

"Undoubtedly things are going to boom in Deeside. When the Court used to be in residence at Balmoral every villa for miles around could be let for almost any money. Now, however, it is unlikely that their Majesties will be long at Balmoral, if at all, and they are likely to spend most of their time with the Duke and Duchess of Fife at Mar Lodge, as at Balmoral everything remains exactly as it did when Queen Victoria was alive. Talk about a run on Deeside, why my future is——"

"Pooh!" contemptuously interrupted Edinburgh, "your ambition to contain within your district the finest houses in Scotland is a dream, a vain dream. On the other hand, my great ambition seems within view of realisation. I am ambitious to be known as the best built city in the world, to contain the finest buildings, streets, tramways——"

"Here is a town," said Glasgow, bitterly, for it does not like to be reminded that Edinburgh is its superior in any respect, "which is one of the worst governed in Britain, airing its absurd ambitions in this way. Why, its tramways, cable tramways——"

"The only cable tramways of the kind in the world, with a single exception, please."

"Oh, certainly, that goes without saying," caustically acquiesced the Second City. "No other town in the world, except Melbourne, would wish to rob you of the honour. A more dismal failure—Are half of your tramways used?"

LIVERPOOL WANTS TO BEAT GLASGOW.

Edinburgh was puzzled for a reply, but Liverpool took up the thread of the conversation.

"There is no necessity for this bickering, but talking of tramways, walking is a lost art in my city."

"How do you make that out?" queried Glasgow.

"Well, my electric cars carry 300,000 passengers a day—that is, nearly one-half of my entire population. I calculate that every adult is a passenger at least once a day, and that at the busier hours of the day one-third of my population is on wheels."

"Hear that, Edinburgh?" remarked Glasgow.

"Don't be too clever, Glasgow," slyly commented Liverpool, "one of my dearest ambitions is to beat you in population, so that I may become the Second City of the Empire."

"Pooh, pooh! Preposterous! You will never do it," was the pompous reply.

"You wait a bit, or I should say, 'you bide a wee,' and you will see what you will see. If I can only succeed in building a vast wall from Dingle to Hale Point, I shall be able to inclose all the foreshore and turn it into a gigantic dock, seven miles long. There will be no dock like it in the world, and, without doubt, it will be the means of wiping off that 75,000 balance of population by which you beat me."

CARDIFF IS COMING ON.

"If, if, if. You are all 'ifs,'" sneered Glasgow.

"Well, with all your poohing, you cannot deny that I have beaten you in the tobacco trade. In years gone past you had the biggest portion of the Kingdom's trade in tobacco. To-day that predominancy has gone. To-morrow it will be mine. I am going to build the biggest tobacco warehouse in the world, a colossal sky-scraper having over thirty-seven acres of floor area. Oh, I'll admit I'm ambitious."

"Presumptuous, you mean," scoffingly suggested Glasgow. "What's the good of building your warehouses when the Yankees are buying up all your leading firms, eh?"

"At any rate, I've beaten you. Yes, and I've beaten London, the unique," was Liverpool's triumphant statement. "I own shipping with a greater carrying power than that of London, and I have beaten London in the value of exports. Looking into the future I can see——"

"That I am going to lick you at your own game," derisively interposed the capital of the Principality of Wales. Cardiff has no small opinion of itself, but it has good reason to be proud, for its progress in recent years is the most remarkable of any town in the United Kingdom.

"I am rapidly overtaking you in the shipping line, Liverpool," it swellingly exclaimed. "In fact, I have beaten you in the number of vessels clearing in a year, actually I've dry-rubbed you. My ambition is to become the leading port of the world."

"Not a very big order, Cardiff," ironically commented Newcastle-under-Lyme. "I like a town with a moderate ambition, being built that way myself. My latest scheme is only a small one; I want to double the size of my town!"

"Your ambition is a bit like Liverpool's, I see, but not quite so absurd," said Manchester, adding decisively: "Liverpool, indeed! Believe me it hasn't got a look in with me. One syndicate of my merchants alone is about to spend £400,000 in building three gigantic spinning mills with 310,000 spindles. My ambition is to become the greatest manufacturing town in the whole world."

"There is no doubt about the utter idiocy of Liverpool's dreamings," agreed Glasgow. "Poor old Liverpool, it must feel sick when it sees how rapidly my big transatlantic trade is growing. I only wish to become the leading shipbuilding city, then I shall be happy. It is not a foolish ambition, as only one port stands in my way."

"That's me," said Sunderland, ungrammatically, but emphatically, "I don't fear that I shall be beaten by you, Glasgow. Look at the big enterprises that are about to add to my importance. New pontoon docks, new quays, new shipyards, new graving-docks, and other vast works, that will make me beyond comparison the largest builder of ships on the face of the globe. My ambition is to get my only railway company to build a decent station in the place of the present sarcasm in brick, which is now a joke at the expense of the largest shipbuilding town in the world."

IRISH TOWNS SQUABBLE.

"Steady, steady," exclaimed Belfast, "not so fast. You've me to reckon with. I'll beat you yet. Have I not built the biggest ships in existence at the biggest shipyard in the world? And haven't I the biggest whisky store in existence, and the biggest tobacco factory, and the biggest linen factory, and the biggest ropery?"

"And the biggest blarney factory!" was Dublin's petulant remark.

"Arrah, go on with you," was the mocking reply. "What says the old proverb: 'Cork was, Dublin is, and Belfast will be.' Sure and there's truth in it. You may be the capital to-day, but my day's coming. Already I've beaten you in population. Some day I'll be the leading builder of ships, and the capital city of Ireland, too."

"Frothy talk, very," decisively remarked Southend. "Let's us get back to solid ground. Now you'll all admit that I'm progressive. Well, it is the height of my ambition to oust Blackpool. Already people call me 'the Blackpool of the South,' and I have endeavoured to give my visitors equal value for their money. As an eastern suburb of London I shall be able to beat the Lancashire town some day."

"If you've luck," was the real Blackpool's pungent addition to the conversation. "Of all the cheek and impudence! Truly, they say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I'm highly flattered, highly. But mark me, youngster, you've a long way to travel before you overtake me. My ambition is to make an enormous promenade——"

MARGATE WISHES TO BE A PORT.

"And to get a few thousand more fat twins," sneered Bexhill-on-Sea, which hates trippers' towns, and is possessed of a great ambition to outshine Brighton. Bexhill's remark had reference to the singular fact that the lady visitors at Blackpool parade about in pairs. Few are thin, while the number of pairs of ladies dressed alike and built alike, is very remarkable. At times the great holiday-place seems to be a town of twins.

"Disgusting," remarked stately Harrogate. "A plebeian ambition. So far as I am concerned, the day is coming when I shall be the first health resort in the world. Already I have displaced many of the great Continental spas in the estimation of people of high degree. Eventually I shall be at the head of all health resorts."

"Blow health resorts, and watering-places," said Margate, of all towns. "I'm fairly well known in that line, you know." Harrogate sniffed, and turned away.

"You needn't turn huffy, if you are a society town," continued Margate. "My ambition isn't connected with trippers. It's grander. I wish to become a great port, I do; and I will be too. I've no dangerous rocks, I can make a fine harbour, and I'm better than Dover as a seaport for the Continent."

DOVER WANTS ATLANTIC LINERS.

"Listen to that," exclaimed Dover, nearly choking with surprise and indignation. "Listen to that! Well, I never did hear such talk. I hold an unchallenged position as the nearest harbour to the Continent. In the future I shall build a new pleasure town on the cliffs, and I shall increase my population enormously. I'll astonish you other towns.

"All my hopes, however, are centred in my becoming a transatlantic port of call. I am about to tackle the subject seriously."

"You need to do so," scoffed Southampton. "You are very moderate in your views, and require the Government to spend only £4,000,000 in addition to the £9,000,000 you will have to spend. However ambitious you may be in your plans, you cannot get away from the fact that the German liners pass you at night, and so give me the advantage."

"Pah! you're blind with jealousy, Southampton. You're nearly crazy with anxiety that you will lose your importance as a seaport. You're——"

"Hoity-toity, what a fuss," merrily interrupted Langholm. "I'll warrant I have achieved the height of the ambition of all you towns."

"How's that," came a great cry.

"I'm without debt, and have more money than I know what to do with," answered the fortunate town. I have no loans, and a sum of over £400 in hand."

WASHING M.P.'S FOR NOTHING.

Odd Privileges of Foreign Legislators.

THE members of the Danish Parliament have the right of entering any Turkish bath within the kingdom and enjoying a luxurious bath for nothing. This privilege is equalled in interest by those of members of certain other parliaments.

Honduras is a republic and its Parliament a congress. Two members are elected for every 10,000 of the inhabitants, the first being called a titular representative, and the other an alternative. When the former cannot attend the sittings of the native House, the latter takes his place and votes, and is compensated for his trouble by being allowed a fee of £2 a day and a free pass on the railways.

San Salvador adopts almost precisely the same methods as are employed in Honduras in respect to her Parliamentary representatives.

Madagascar is a French protectorate, though the country is allowed to do pretty well what it likes in the making of laws, which are fashioned by a few of the leaders of the State, and then read out to the populace for their assent, which, of course, is always given. This small legislative body is called together at the will of the Sovereign, and expenses incurred are defrayed by the Royal exchequer, save those for shaving and hair-cutting, the cost for which is borne by the barbers on whom the members of the council call on their way to or from the capital.

No matter where an Italian member of Parliament wants to go to, even to remotest parts of the world, his countrymen's steamers will convey him and feed him whilst on board for nothing. He is also presented with a gold medal which he hangs on his watch-chain as a symbol that he is a member of Parliament, and the steamship companies, with the railways, forward him a joint ticket to fold in two for the waistcoat pocket, one side of which bears his likeness for identification, and the other the pass.

In addition to those compliments, whilst the House is sitting, the country feeds him for nothing—he has the run of the Parliamentary dining-rooms, being permitted to eat and drink whatever he chooses from the *menu*. And to crown all, a doctor is in special attendance at the House for free consultation by the members.

Generous as this state of things is in Italy, there is even a better arrangement in Sweden and Norway, whose members of the Diet are paid from 11s. to 14s. a day for a term of years. The House of Parliament is composed of nobles, clergy, peasants and burghers, and as the two former classes are in a position to permit them to waive their monetary perquisite, the amount is passed on by rotation, and given to the poorer members.

Those members hailing from Norway may engage the services of both doctors and dentists for themselves and their families, and the State will pay the piper; but, singular to say, this privilege is not extended to the Swedish members.

Our own British members of Parliament would be very glad if the State were to only allow them what the United States allows its senators; we mean apart from the £1,000 which is the perquisite of both senators and deputies forming Congress. But in addition to this "compensation amount," as it is called, each senator is allowed the services of a clerk, whose business it is to follow his master wherever the latter goes, and to write his letters for him.

Everybody knows how Japan is fast becoming a Western empire in manners and customs. The Mikado has a Parliament which is modelled on our own, the mother of parliaments. But the Emperor goes one further than that. He allows all the members a sum of £200 a year for four years, and only requires them to sit for three months in the year. In addition to this the members, whether in or out of office, are appointed to the various offices under Government in preference to men who have not served in Parliament.

Germany makes a distinction with a difference. Whilst the members of the Prussian Diet are paid 15s. a day, the members of the German Reichstag (Berlin) are granted a first-class free pass over all the railways, and, generally speaking, have free entrée to the places of amusement in Berlin, and other privileges of a similar nature.

The Dutch Parliament is a model one in respect to the attention which is paid in an official way to its members. For four years they are paid a sum of £160, their travelling expenses are paid, and those who have not apartments or houses in the capital may, during the sitting of Parliament, put up wherever they like, and in certain cases and under certain conditions, their hotel bills are defrayed by a grateful country.

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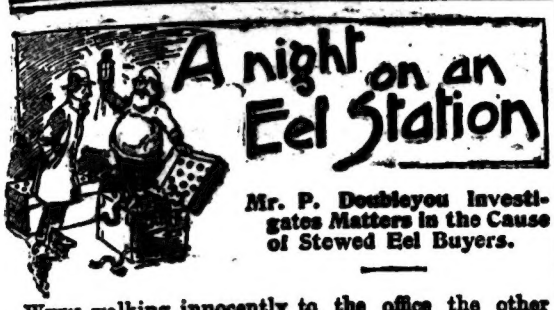


Mr. P. Doubleyou Investigates Matters in the Cause of Stewed Eel Buyers.

When walking innocently to the office the other morning, I came upon a ladder that stood with its base planted midway on the pavement and its top against a house. I make a rule of not walking underneath ladders, but on this particular occasion I made an exception in order to avoid a collision with a charming young lady who had, I could see, a similar aversion with regard to ladders. As the pavement was narrow and the road was muddy, I gave in to her and went beneath the ladder. It was just a sudden impulse of my kind heart. However, I anticipated ill-luck from the breaking of one of my pet rules, and, sure enough, on reaching the office I was summoned to the Editor's sanctum. The Editor seemed peevish, I thought, as he said:

"Morning! I have a little job for you. It will wake you up, I hope.

"Go to Liverpool Street station and take a three-day ticket for Yarmouth. There's a nice quick train leaves every morning at 5.8 o'clock. Go by that to-morrow morning, and you will have time to look round during the day. Inquire for the neighbourhood of the river Bure of the first policeman you meet. If he proves to be a sensible man, and one who has read our historic lines on 'Etiquette for Policemen,' you may tell him that it is your wish to spend a night on an eel-station, or an eel-sett, as it is styled in East Anglia. He will direct you to the house of some man who is engaged in the business, from whom I wish you to get permission to spend a night engaged in the task of eel-catching. You can easily borrow a few things when you are on the spot. Be off!"

This was the result of going under a ladder.

I MAKE AN EARLY START.

Liverpool Street station, at five o'clock in the morning, is a scene of bustle. If one doesn't run into a milk-can one is run into by a mail-cart man.

On application at the booking-office I found I could get a cheap ticket available for fifteen days. I did this, and before getting into the train I sat down on a seat, and wrote the Editor a post-card to the effect that as my ticket was available for fifteen days, I should be grateful for a few lines saying that that period of leave of absence met with his approval. As I mentioned, it seemed a pity not to take what the railway company offered for nothing.

Yarmouth is where the bloaters come from. Let me here also put on record that it is a town where the policemen are a smart set of men. I chatted with three of them, and each one, on learning my identity, gave me a message to the Editor bearing on the etiquette subject. They all wished me to thank him for omitting all reference to cooks and rabbit pie!

After a stroll about Yarmouth, and a good midday meal at the Royal Hotel, I was introduced to an old eel-man, named John Bushby. I liked John the moment I set eyes upon him; he seemed so human. He put his body into a most uncomfortable attitude so that I might have the support of his shoulder in getting into his boat. And when I gave him a four-ounce packet of tobacco he declared that there was something in my face that took his fancy the moment he clapped eyes on me. You see our admiration was mutual.

I ARRIVE AT THE FISHING HUT.

After sailing for an hour past woods and pastures, tall reeds and formidable boulders, we pull up, and John tells me that we have arrived. I ask him what he means, and he explains that the little black hut, built of wood and covered with tarpaulin and pitch, and leaning dangerously near the water's edge, is his head-quarters. The hut is small; a lifeguardsman would want another foot or two added to its height were he to march about within it with any safety to his head. It is eight or nine feet long, and six or seven feet wide.

By a lamp and candles—the latter lighted solely for my benefit—I am enabled to inspect its interior. Cups and saucers, a frying-pan, tackle, a collection of tin canisters, half-a-dozen black clay pipes, a couple of eggs, a bundle of oil-skins, a coil of rope and a ball of twine, a boat-hook, a stew-pot, a kettle, several cups and plates, a tin tea-pot are its chief contents. A photograph of Buller hangs cheek by jowl with an almanac for 1897.

Further inspection reveals other features, but I am already given a job by John, who thinks it might save time if I rake out the little grate and light a fire with a view to the making of two pints of hot coffee. Now I am not a "flannelled fool," and I don't mind roughing it when it is really necessary to do so, but I think the Editor, in sending me down to do an account of an eel-sett, might have sent one of his valets with me. Think of me, gentle reader, being sent a hundred and twenty miles away from my familiar haunts, and then being asked, nay, bidden, to rake out a grate and light a fire! Were John less of a good soul I might have said I wouldn't do it; or had I been less in need of a pint of hot coffee myself I might have said I wouldn't do it, but in the special circumstances I took off both my coats and rolled up my cuffs and did it like a man. And a spanking fire I made, too. John said: "Now, Sonny, mind you don't fire the whole bloomin' show."

"Ah, ah," says John, later on, as he sups at his mug of steaming hot coffee. "You town chaps do know how to do some things, I see; this coffee is first-rate. But, by gum, what a hole you've made in my week's 'lowance!"

With the coffee we have several slices of excellent cold boiled bacon, and more pieces of bread than I should care to be seen demolishing in a London bun-shop. At the end of this primitive repast we take out our pipes and chat for a little time. It is eight o'clock, and John is anxious to get to business. He goes over his net, which, in appearance, is much like the ordinary trawl net, though the meshes are of necessity much smaller. The neck or mouth of the net is weighted on one side, either by a few links of heavy chain or by perforated stones, while on the other side are several big pieces of cork, which buoy it just enough to result in the neck or mouth being kept open while in the water.

THE FIRST CATCH.

With the net as arranged by John the top rope is long enough to reach from bank to bank, across the river, and the ends are securely fastened to stout stakes driven into the earth. In this way the net is kept in a taut position, for the weights at the other side of the mouth of the net are sunk into the mud of the river-bed. Should a vessel come along the top rope is slackened and the boat sails over the scene of eel capture.

The mouth of the net is huge, and eels, and occasionally other fish, enter it without being aware of the fact.

The real end of the net is a fine narrow cod-piece made of even finer mesh than the net itself. In time this becomes well freighted with booty, and it can then be detached and another cod-piece put into the same position, without bodily taking up the main net.

At ten o'clock, in a steady downpour of cold rain, John and I hauled up the poke of the net, and as the end, or cod-piece, came within sight, it swayed and swelled and bulged with life. Then we make for the shore to dump down the poke with its inclosed living mass upon the wet grass. As I stand dumb and wondering, John drags up a large deal chest which he calls an eel trunk. The surface of the trunk is pierced all over with small holes, and into it are placed the wriggling eels, until the arrival of the expected purchaser, who will come in due course on board his collecting boat.

I LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT EELS.

John informed me that there were between forty and fifty pounds of eels in that first catch, but that, with ordinary luck, we shall take nearly double that at a haul later on. This proved to be quite true, by the way.

In answer to one of my many questions, John told me that eels don't "run" on a full-moon night. The light, it seems, causes them to keep closer quarters, and he has gone out for four or five successive nights and his total bag for the whole time has not turned the scale at twenty pounds. A dark drizzling night, when there is a likelihood of thunder, is the ideal time for eel-catching. On such nights the fish will even leave the river, and crawl through the wet grass for seventy or a hundred yards.

Eels, of course, vary a good deal in size and weight; a good large one will weigh between four and five pounds, though an eight-pound eel is not an unknown size among the eel-men on the River Bure.

I RETURN TO LONDON.

The night wears on and on. We have good hauls and indifferent hauls, but John seems satisfied with his luck.

His conversation was stimulating. He tells me that a four-pound eel will contain upwards of five million eggs! I gasp, and ask him if he doesn't mean five thousand. But he drawls out that he means just what he says—five million. It is news to me, but I suppose John ought to know, as he has had such experience of eels as is never likely to fall to me.

At dawn, John and I have more coffee, and I am almost, but not quite, tempted to taste stewed eels. I look at the reflection of my face in John's broken bit of mirror, and I wonder if the Editor would recognise me were he to meet me in the Strand. I am, indeed, dirty and forlorn. But John is still cheery, and as I set off in a friend's boat for Yarmouth, he shouts after us: "Don't forget, it's five million eggs, not five thousand!"

On reaching the Royal Hotel, Yarmouth, I find that the Editor has answered the request I sent him on the post-card. He has telegraphed me: "Expect you back at the office to-morrow."

YOUNGSTER (aged five, to his sister): "I know more'n you do. I know where all the places in the world are."

Sister: "Oh, Henry! what a story; you don't."

Henry: "I do, then. They're in the atlas, and I'm sitting on it."

HOW THE TAX COLLECTOR LETS US LIVE.

You can Neither Come into the World nor Go out of it without Paying a Tax.

The first thing that every human being has to do after coming into this world is to get his or her birth registered. This is where the tax-collector first comes in and practically says to the new-born citizen and future tax-payer, "A penny, please." In other words, there has to be a penny stamp on the certificate of registration. If you don't get registered it is a matter of forty shillings and costs, or the equivalent in time.

After you have got born and registered you proceed to live, and to do this you have to take certain food and, directly or indirectly, all this food is taxed. For instance, milk, which will form a large portion of your early diet, is not supposed to be taxed, but it is.

The cow could not give milk unless she had land whereon to graze, and land cannot be used for grazing purposes unless it pays land-tax, wherefore a tax is really paid on the most elementary article of human diet. It is the same with bread and meat, for the tax on land is necessarily a tax on bread and beef.

When you have grown up a bit, you begin to take stimulants—mild ones at first, such as tea, coffee, and cocoa, and the tax-collector is looking over your shoulder at every drink you take. Later on you take other drinks, and possibly you learn to smoke. He is there all the time, and, no matter how ill your first smoke makes you, with every whiff you must put something into the insatiable hand of his. Later still, you go to work, and begin to earn money. Someone pays you two pounds or more, and the spectre at your side says: "I'll take a penny of that, please," and if you don't put a stamp on the receipt, it may be another question of forty shillings and costs.

This brings up a question which I daresay has puzzled a great number of people: Why is it illegal to give a post-dated cheque? The reason is this. A owes B, say, ten pounds; but it is not convenient to pay on the moment, so he gives him a cheque dated a month later. That cheque is practically a promise to pay, and, unless it is given in the Isle of Man, it requires a penny stamp on it. Now, this is an illegal transaction, because that cheque is really a promissory note, and ought to bear a threepenny stamp.

The penalty for giving or accepting an insufficiently stamped document of this kind is ten pounds, which may be levied on *both* parties; therefore, if you give or accept such a cheque, the spectre at your elbow will touch you on the shoulder and say: "You are trying to do me out of twopence! Ten pounds and costs, please."

No agreement entered into in this country between man and man or man and woman may properly be made unless Mr. Tax-collector gets something out of it. If A and B make such an agreement and don't have the document stamped, neither can hold the other to his written word unless he is prepared to pay ten pounds penalty for producing the unstamped document in a court of law. A sixpenny stamp would have sufficed to begin with, but after fourteen days that sixpence has grown into ten pounds.

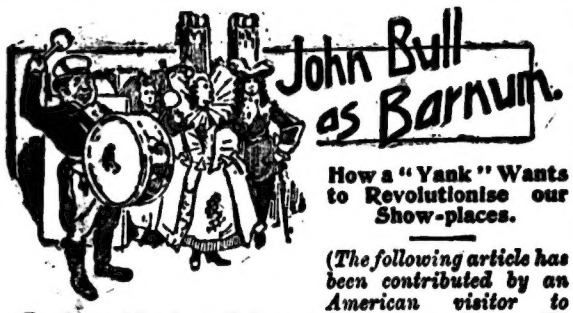
When a man has got fairly to work he wants a house to live in. However humble it is, he can't go into it without paying toll to the tax-collector. This is called inhabited house duty, and if he doesn't pay it himself his landlord does, and does not forget to add it on to the rent.

When a man has got an income and a house, the next thing he wants is a wife. Some men get the wife first; but that is a mistake. Even here the spectre is still at his shoulder and walks with him and his bride to the altar. His lowest preliminary demand amounts to two shillings; one shilling for the entry of notice of intention to marry, and one shilling for the certificate of notice. A further fee of four shillings has to be paid when the twain are made one. The certificate will cost two and sixpence and, at the bidding of the spectre, a penny stamp has to be put on that. The most expensive way of getting married is by special license an here the fee for the license stamp amounts to twenty-nine pounds eight shillings.

The spectre, of course, stands by the cradle of every child that is born, and so too he is present at the death-bed of every man and woman who dies. Legally speaking, you can neither come into the world nor go out of it without paying him toll for your entrance and exit. The doctor cannot give a legal certificate of death unless there is a penny stamp on it, and the spectre follows the corpse even to the brink of the grave and demands another penny for a certificate of burial.

This is what happens if you are a comparatively poor man; but if you happen to die rich the tax-collector goes back with the funeral party and pays great attention to the reading of the will. Death has claimed you, but that other spectre has not done with you yet. If you have only left £500 behind you he will ask and take £1 out of every £100; if you are a hundred thousand pounder he will take six pounds per hundred, and if you are a millionaire it will cost you eighty thousand pounds to square up with the spectre before he will allow you to rest quietly in your grave, and permit your wife and family to enjoy what is left of your possibly hard-earned wealth.

FIVE SHILLINGS A DAY FOR LIFE! A huge prize for a simple task. Particulars later.



How a "Yank" Wants to Revolutionise our Show-places.

(The following article has been contributed by an American visitor to London, with whom, it is scarcely necessary to say, the Editor entirely disagrees.).

YES, I am an Amurrican. And I came over here to show you Britishers a wrinkle. Incidentally also to make a million or so for myself.

I wanted to unfold my scheme to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day. Offered to raise him an extra ten millions or thereabouts for his war budget without levying a single new tax, or increasing any of the old ones.

Would you believe it?—my proposal was rejected. Surprised, eh? You will be more surprised when you hear what that proposal was. So unique; so perfectly "twencent." (This is the American way of writing Twentieth Century.—ED.) Why, there are simply barrels of money in it.

Briefly, my idea is to "Barnumise"—if I may be permitted to coin a word—your Tower of London, your Westminster Abbey, and your other similar national show places.

The scheme was thought out during a visit I paid to the first-named. I had heard a lot of the Tower—every American has—and I naturally expected to see something interesting, something up-to-date. Did I? Not a bit of it.

A man in an outlandish dress showed me a cracked paving-stone, and said he: "That's where Anne Boleyn was executed." Afterwards he took me into a sort of niche in the wall, and remarked, in about the tone of voice used by the average man when ordering a drink: "In this cell Sir Walter Raleigh spent twelve years of his life." A little further along he halted before an article that I took to be a pair of discarded tongs of the mediæval variety, and drawled out something about its being an instrument of torture called the "scavenger's daughter." And so on, and so on.

HAVE WAXWORKS AT THE TOWER AND—

Now, this sort of thing, it struck me at once—and I wonder the same idea had never occurred to any of you Britishers—could be enormously improved upon. What is wanted is to bring realism to bear on the show. A waxwork tableau of the execution of Anne Boleyn, set up on the very spot where the real operation took place, would draw hundreds of pounds a week as a side-show.

Same with Walter Raleigh's cell. Put a dummy Raleigh in there, doublet, hose, slashed sleeves, rapier and all complete, and charge an extra sixpence on the turnstile system, just as they do at the Westminster Aquarium.

Then look what a chance there is in the murder of the two little princes. Just for a change we might makes this a living picture—babes asleep—villains enter on tiptoe—realistic smothering scene; repeated at intervals throughout the day, admission, one shilling! Why, there isn't a mother or a schoolboy in England but would want to see it, and pay cheerfully for the privilege. Coming down from the room is the stone step in the staircase under which they were buried. How easy to make this revolve on its axis on placing a penny in the slot, showing the shallow grave with the (wax) bodies of the poor little innocents inside.

—SIDESHOWS AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Same with all the other sights—bring 'em up to date, make 'em realistic. They've got a model of a rack there, with a doll on it. Make the model life-size, and put a real woman on it—taking care, of course, to rest her comfortably, and see she was not hurt—and you would have people tumbling over one another at half-a-crown a head to get inside the inclosure and view the exhibition.

And, of course, I wouldn't stop at the Tower. There's Westminster Abbey. At present they've only got one really slap-up interesting show there. That's the waxworks, and they hide them away in a sort of garret, and don't let you see 'em unless you specially ask to, as if they were ashamed of 'em.

Now, I'd have those figures: Charles II., poor old Anne, with her wobbly orb and sceptre, Elizabeth with her cart-wheel ruff, and all the rest of 'em, out in the central transept. Furbish 'em up, give 'em new clothes, make a few additions—you might run in Gladstone, and Bradlaugh, and Washington (he'd catch the Americans), Parnell (to draw the Irish)—and you'd have a waxwork show that'd make Tussaud's feel like cutting rates down next door above zero.

Edward the Confessor's tomb, too! What do you see now? Just an ordinary sort of British Museum sarcophagus, and a dusty statue. Seems to me, really, as if you Britishers don't begin to realise what you owe to these old chaps. You ought to know, if you don't, that in olden times devout persons used to sit in front of Teddy's shrine in order to cure themselves of leprosy and locomotor ataxy and ingrowing toe-nails, and other similar ailments.

Why not reproduce the scene.

Take a chunk out of the tenth century, and dump it down in the twentieth. Let's have some waxen Anglo-Saxon swineherds, and papier-maché Norman knights, and "fayre maiddes" a-weeping, and all that sort of thing. Do the thing properly. Spend a few thousands in the provision of similar "properties" all over the Abbey. Charge a shilling admission, with twopenny, sixpenny, eighteen-penny, and half-a-crown side-shows. And you will have a net revenue inside of six months that would be equivalent to a penny tacked on to the income-tax.

Nor need you, of course, stick to London. Buy up Stonehenge. Your Government could have it for a song. Reconstruct it. Advertise regular reproductions of realistic human sacrifices, with Druidical chants and mistletoe-kissing accompaniments, and engage a troupe of "woad-stained warriors in their great original war-dance," and you couldn't run enough excursion trains to Salisbury Plain. I reckon that Stonehenge alone, properly stage-managed, would mean a penny a barrel off beer.

START A SHAKESPEARE-LAND.

I understand that between twenty and twenty-five thousand people visit Stratford-on-Avon every year. You might easily raise those figures to a million or a million and a half, if your Government had an ounce of enterprise in its composition.

How? Why, buy up the town, the whole sheebang—freehold, houses, and all. Compulsory purchase where necessary, same as for a new railroad. Then put a stockade right round it, people it with Shakespeare's characters and charge for admission.

You needn't pay your Hamlets, or your Romeos, or your Desdemonas. Let 'em go about their own businesses, as people in an ordinary town would, but make it essential that every man, woman, and child in the place impersonated some character from Shakespeare, dressed up to it, spoke up to it, acted up to it.

Think of it! The visitor would pass through one of the gates, and step straight into Shakespeare-land. His hotel would like enough be kept by Othello, and Falstaff would be quaffing sack (or Scotch-and-Polly) in the bar parlour. He would enter a shop to purchase a souvenir, and be served by Cleopatra, or Portia, or Imogen. Ariel would pilot him round the "sights," and Miranda bring him his coffee in the morning. And out in the streets, shopping, chatting, taking the air, a motley throng of characters known to all the world: Shylock, in his gaberdine; stately Lady Macbeth; Iago, saturnine, and scowling; poor, lean, old Lear; hunch-back Gloster, and a hundred others. Why, such a show as that would lick creation. There wouldn't be a man or woman in the two hemispheres but would want to see it; and most of 'em would, too, some time or another in their lives.

EXPLOIT THE CHESHIRE CHEESE.

Then, again, there are your old-time taverns scattered up and down the country. Regular little gold mines they'd be, exploited properly. But that's just the thing you don't do, and won't do.

Take the old Cheshire Cheese, for instance. Let John just buy that "historic and ancient inn," *vide* the guide books, fix up a turnstile at either entrance, charge a shilling admission, build a brand-new island-bar, lay down more sawdust, put in an extra half-dozen high-backed pews, and have a pudding all day and every day. That for a beginning. Next resuscitate Sam Johnson, Boswell, and the rest of 'em—real, live men, mind, no dummies—and let 'em sit in the bar in their snuffy old saddle-flap coats and frowsy old wigs drinking with the visitors, and the concern'd pay off the capital invested out of the first five years' dividends.

No, sir-ee! John Bull taxes John Bull because John Bull is an unenterprising idiot. If Uncle Sam only had a tithe of the old castles, and abbeys, and towers, and ancient inns, and all the other mildewed and musty thingumbobs that belong by right of inheritance to John, d'ye think we'd be paying sixteen pence in the pound income-tax? Naw! Not much!

"WHAT is motor-car derived from?"
"A rich husband, my dear."

MRS. GADDIE: "My husband is so slipshod. His buttons are for ever coming off."

Mrs. Goode (severely): "Perhaps they are not sewed on properly."

Mrs. Gaddie: "That's just it. He's awfully careless about his sewing."

IN a well-known shipbuilding yard on the upper reaches of the Clyde, the rivet boys seem to have a grievance as to their weekly wage, as the following will show:

On the plates of one of the ships now under construction one of the boys has written in large writing:

"The wages of sin is death, but the wages of the rivet boys is worse."

A WEEK'S KEEP FOR 2s. 4d.

A Few Hints for those Seeking Admission to the "Big House."

IF you wish to have a really grand time go to the Constance Road workhouse of the Camberwell Guardians. You may not find the company to be altogether select, but then, again, the probability is that you may not be able to get in at all. This workhouse is crowded out.

No wonder that this is the case. A splendid dietary is provided, and should you be so fortunate as to obtain admission, you will be regaled with joints of meat and vegetables for dinner five times a week. Moreover, thanks to the generosity of a Peckham resident, the inmates are now in possession of a number of sets of ping-pong.

Scarborough workhouse is also crowded out at present. Its excellence as a place of residence has been extolled by no less an authority than a member of the Board of Guardians. With chest proudly expanded, he announced that he knew that everything requisite for the well-being of both body and soul was to be found there. He knew, because his own father was in the workhouse.

When you are choosing your workhouse, by all means avoid Bradford. There they have a wonderful and mysterious set of meals, known as No. 1 diet. By its use the cost of keep amounts to 2s. 4d. a week for each inmate. Let none inquire into the nature of this diet, but let him be content with the knowledge that Bradford is not a pauper's paradise.

The sister town of Leeds boasts that its paupers are probably the finest set possessed by any Union in the country. It attributes this to the fact that its workhouse is a teetotal workhouse. Stimulants are barred—even rum in the plum pudding sauce at Christmas.

Some years ago this workhouse had a special brewer of its own, who made 12,680 gallons of beer in one year. Now the inmates are total abstainers.

According to figures the Union obtained for its information, West Ham spends 7s. 8d. every year for liquor for each of its inmates. Wolverhampton spends 7s.; Bristol, 6s. 11d.; Plymouth, 5s. 11d.; Nottingham, 2s. 8d.; Bath, 2s. 5d.; Sheffield, 1s. 10d.; Birmingham a penny less, and Manchester twopence less; Leicester and Norwich, 1s. 6d. each; Liverpool, 1s. 4d.; Cardiff, 1s. 1d.; Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1d.; and Leeds, ½d.

Should you want sport, by all means enter the Stamford workhouse. Not long ago, the master went to his Board for instructions. A fox was roaming about in one of the blocks of the building. The animal had evaded the hounds when hunted, and had made its way into the workhouse, where it determined to stop, it seemed.

If you have a little money put by, and wish to pay for your keep, go to the Driffield house. Paying paupers are "taken in and done for," as the notice board says.

It was quite a brilliant idea which struck some Wigan men. They broke into the workhouse and robbed it. Perhaps they held the same views as seven Dover tramps, who recently inscribed these pathetic lines on the workhouse wall:

"God made the bees,
The bees make the honey;
Tramps do the work,
The Guardians get the money."

Not always though. A "gentleman tramp," not long ago, was captured by the police, who, upon searching him, found he possessed a large fortune. His ragged clothes were lined with bank-notes. His explanation was that he had a great love for the fascinating life of a tramp.

An even more striking case hails from across the herring-pond. Mr. James Eade How has just inherited a vast fortune, he is a millionaire in fact, but he holds certain socialistic views. His argument is that as he has not earned the money he should not use it.

Accordingly he tramps about, chopping wood for his board and lodging. At the same time he mixes freely with tramps, and other social outcasts, so that he may gain a knowledge at first hand of certain social conditions, with a view to ameliorating them.

New Jersey is a tramp's paradise at present. An old tramp, "Jimmie," has just died, leaving a little fortune of over £4,000 to a hotel proprietor, Mrs. Patrick Fitzgerald.

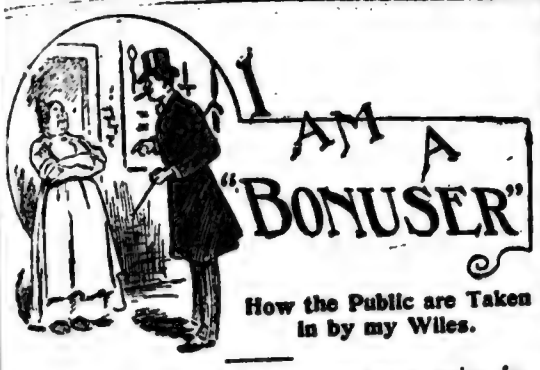
He explained in his will that he did this because Mrs. Fitzgerald once gave him a free breakfast, several years back. The tramps are now reaping a rich harvest of free breakfasts from women who wish to have good fortune similar to that of the hotel proprietor.

A most remarkable affair occurred at Newcastle-under-Lyme, in Staffordshire, a short time ago which created a great sensation in the district. A man, dressed in tramp's clothes, was found dead under a hedge at Rugby, and was buried in a pauper's grave.

It has since been discovered that the body was that of a wealthy man, a leading man of the town, who had left his home a fortnight before to go on his holidays.

The South-Western district of England has the most paupers, Somersetshire being especially noted. One town, Wincanton, has six paupers among every hundred of its inhabitants, and it costs the large sum of 6s. 7d. per head of population to relieve this deep poverty.

Have you seen the girl on SHORT STORIES cover?



How the Public are Taken in by my Wiles.

THE more knowing of the insurance canvassing fraternity are proclaiming themselves specialists, and are known by names descriptive of the particular dodge by which they succeed in obtaining the needful "new biz."

There is, for instance, the "special" canvasser, or "representative." This is the gentleman who calls upon you when you have kicked your regular collector down the front steps for daring to suggest to your eldest daughter the desirability of holding a substantial policy on her venerable pa (on the strict q.t., of course).

The "special" apologises for the misdirected zeal of the collector, who, instead, should have gone direct to the fountain head, and explained the magnificent benefits of Table A—a table which the "special" feels sure the company will have to withdraw on account of its ruinous advantages to the public. He it is who with sublime persuasiveness "takes" you off to the company's doctor, where, almost against your will, you are examined for another £100 to be settled on the aforesaid daughter.

It is the "special" who mysteriously finds out that you are insured in X—— Co., and who calls on you to argue the pros and cons of paying into such "a bankrupt, swindling, bust-up Monte Carlo," as he gracefully terms the other office. If you succumb to his sweet blandishments you will get no end of "special" treatment. At least, you will get a special, nice, young man to collect, a "special benefit" policy, a special premium book, a special pamphlet on the merits of your investment, and perhaps a few choice specimens of some very special lies on the importance of the "special" to his particular office.

BEWARE OF "SPECIALS"—

The "special" will "specially" call some day (always a "special" errand), to explain that he finds you are insured on absolutely the dearest table in the office's prospectus. He is surprised the collector hasn't pointed it out, and you begin to feel quite alarmed. He then proceeds to explain those new endowment tables on the Joint Life policies.

He quotes the rates in both tables for certain ages, taking care to use the *same* age for both examples, but when you eagerly express your willingness to change to the "new" tables, he does not tell you your new policy will be issued at your *present* age, and that the difference between your age now, and at first entry, will quite outbalance any possible advantage to you by the change.

Very often a member actually loses in benefit by this trick of transferring to another table, while, in every case, all premiums paid under the first policy are entirely lost. In some cases the offices themselves have not been without the suspicion of introducing a new, attractive, and complicated table with a special eye to this game.

The fact that the age at entry does not appear on many industrial policies lays the way open for many frauds, as will presently be seen.

The "increaser," "bonuser," or "pusher-up," as he variously called, is another variety of canvasser. The "increaser," to use the best-known name, accompanies the collectors on their rounds. His special object is to get you to increase your premiums, *i.e.*, to "push up" the size of the agent's "debit." If he sees you rent a piano, or perambulator, he suggests you insure your old aunt for sufficient to buy one on her demise; if you pay 1s. a week, he thinks 2s. more befits your station in life, and you are flattered, and give him more business.

—ALSO OF "INCREASERS."

If baby is insured for 1d., he explains that a 6d. endowment is far better; if pa has just died, and club money has come your way, he says how much better it would have been if you had received double the money; you agree, and he points the moral by suggesting the doubling of the insurance on your remaining parent.

The "increaser" has a peculiar weakness which you must guard against. When you have decided to increase a certain insurance, he carelessly suggests that "it had better all be on one policy." You, more carelessly, acquiesce, and hand over your old policy. When, however, the increaser gets home he quietly lapses your old policy, and sends in a proposal *at the present age* for the total premium you will now be paying. You, therefore, lose all the money already paid, besides which, on account of the difference in age, the policy is several pounds short in benefit to that to which you are entitled. For example: A insured at age forty-seven at 6d. a week. He was insured for £20 8s. Six years after, he decided to pay 1s. a week, and at the canvasser's suggestion he gave up his policy "for alteration." Whereas he should then have received an additional 6d. policy for £16 4s., making an insurance of £36 12s. in all, he instead received a 1s. policy for £32 8s., dating from the time that A increased. By this transaction, which only recently came to light, the company gained the £4 4s. paid on the first policy, besides which A lost £7 16s. difference in benefit!

The "increaser," on the whole, is perhaps a little more careful in his doings than other canvassers on account of having to periodically visit the same houses, but occasionally another of the fraternity will smile a knowing smile as he watches a rival increaser dive into the corner pub. or skulk round the corner, while the collector calls at a house by himself.

The "bonuser" is merely a variety of "increaser" specially trained in the art of gaining the maximum of new proposals. When granting the bonuses which accrue on old policies, members are generally ignorant of the fact that the bonus may be demanded, and so when they are told that "all members of so many years' standing, who double their premiums, will receive a bonus," they are not slow in increasing the insurance. The "bonuser" travels a good deal, visiting only those long insured in the society. Many readers will recognise him, and will know now that they need not have increased their payments to get their bonus.

For unblushing effrontery, however, commend us to "the gentleman from London." Armed, as he alleges, with special powers from Head Office to examine policies and books, this "gentleman" travels from district to district, dressed in full regimentals of top hat and frock coat, but is much too wise to stop long in one place. Relying as much upon bluster and a species of terrorism, as on roguery, this spurious "Londoner" has sometimes succeeded in raising such a storm after his visit to a town, that whole staffs of collectors have come out on strike, rather than face the consequences of a second visit, and, in one well-known instance, where the collectors went in a body to another office, a costly lawsuit resulted, involving ruin to several.

THE GENTLEMAN FROM LONDON.

The system of the "G.F.L." makes him, however, a very valuable acquisition to his office. His object is to reduce arrears, increase the premiums and generally to wake up both members and agents. Woe betide the member in arrears, for as the terrible "G.F.L." stands before the poor member (or, rather, to be exceedingly correct, the poor member's wife), he has his pen ready to strike the member off the books should the *whole* of the needful not be forthcoming, quite regardless, of course, of the statutory notice required by law. True, an obliging offer might be made to wait until the poor woman has run to "uncle's," but if the members are long entered the "gentleman" is more concerned to "re-enter" them.

He will strike off all arrears, he says, and give the member a clear start again on new policies. "Better pay a little more a week this time," is his suggestion, "and obtain more benefit," and by the simple dodge of getting increased premiums he blinds the member from seeing the loss really suffered through increased ages. Then extolling his company for so generously disposing of the arrears, our fine gentleman departs with a face full of smiles, together with the old policies, and his bundle of increased proposals.

In this way the visit of one "G.F.L." to a town will result in the wiping off of hundreds of pounds of arrears, ridding the company of enormous liability on old policies, while actually effecting an increase in the future income.

The "gentleman from London" is full of dodges by which he attains his ends, his chief method being that of declaring on the proposal forms that all new members are possessed of spotless bills of health; he gets the members to sign the forms, and leave him to fill in the reply to the questions on health.

DOCTORING BILLS OF HEALTH.

Of course, as the member solemnly declares that the whole of the statements on the proposal are true, the company has the upper hand from the beginning, should they wish to question a claim on the grounds of health.

Insurance offices can be very blind at times, for the writer has seen so many as 500 proposals, where there wasn't a solitary variation in the negative answers to the twelve questions as to health.

Not only is the canvasser an adept at getting his proposal signed without being read, but he will actually get his signatures without the person knowing that a proposal has been signed at all. A relative may wish to effect a "quiet" insurance on your life, and the canvasser will try several dodges before he finally decides to write your "signature" himself. A common dodge is to ask for your book or policy for examination at the local office. You receive a receipt with much circumlocution, and when your papers are returned a few days later, you are asked "to sign this receipt," which you do, and the canvasser sneaks off with his proposal signed.

If you are not a member at all, he will represent that Mr. X., a neighbour, is insuring for a big amount, and that it is customary to obtain a neighbour's testimony as to health and habits. He apparently jots down your replies to his questions, and presently he asks you to "sign here," and hey presto! the trick's done.

☞ **The first two coupons appear in *Short Stories* dated February 22nd, and *Big Budget* dated February 22nd.**

Name-Hunting Competition.

FOOTBALL CLUBS AND PLAYERS.

1st Prize: £25.
2nd Prize: £10.
5 Prizes of £1 each.

Special Prize for Ladies. *A six-guinea costume, which the winner may have made anywhere and send the bill to us.*

In the event of ladies winning the first cash prize, the Special Prize will go to the lady next most nearly correct. Should gentlemen win the first cash prize, the Special Prize will go to the lady most nearly correct. In the event of a tie it will be awarded at the discretion of the Editor.

Below will be found fifteen sets of words, each set describing the name of either a football club or a football player. All clubs and players are Association, and will be found in the "Football Who's Who."

Write down in the spaces provided the names of all those clubs and players you can discover. If you can't find all, put down as many as you can.

Note These Facts. . .

1. **Names must be written in ink.**
2. **Only one name is allowed against each set of words.**
3. **Where initials are indicated they must be put down. If omitted, the solution will be wrong.**
4. **When you have filled up your list, cut it out and keep it by you until one more coupon has appeared.**
5. **You may send in as many sets of lists as you like, but each set will be accepted independently, and must be pinned together.**
6. **In the event of the prize being divided, only one share will go to each successful competitor, no matter how many duplicate attempts he may send in.**
7. **No competitor may receive the assistance of professional competition solvers whose advertisements appear in the Press. Every person who enters for this competition must do so only on this understanding, and those selected as winners may be asked to satisfy us that they have not contravened this condition.**

The first prize of £25 will be given to the reader from whom we receive coupons containing the greatest number of correct solutions. The second prize will be given to the sender of the next most nearly correct solutions, and so on. In the event of a tie, the prizes will be awarded at the discretion of the Editor, whose decision is final.

3rd List. Cut to edge—>

Example:

Hired lodgings	Chambers.
31. Frozen dew	31
32. H arrow maker	32
33. Grasp stem of tree	33
34. Cheerful	34
35. Five shillings joined together	35
36. To confirm	36
37. Trunk of an animal	37
38. Pulsations	38
39. Hurried on	39
40. Manufactured a valley	40
41. William's large cask	41
42. A mound	42
43. Jay, son of John	43
44. Watered silk	44
45. Fire shovel	45

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Cut to edge—>

In order that competitors may have plenty of room to write their solutions, the coupon should be cut through the margin of the paper to the edge.

All the names depicted will be found in "Football Who's Who," which contains the biographies of nearly a thousand players, and can be obtained for 1s. 3d., post free, from the publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

ANOTHER RAILWAY STATIONS COMPETITION STARTS NEXT WEEK.

Public Gifts that have become Public Nuisances.

There is no more delicious and refreshing fruit, especially in a hot, dry and thirsty land, than the prickly pear. Realising this, and wishing to do his kinsmen a good turn, Charles Warren, a native of New South Wales settled in California, sent from the latter country to the Government of the former, a consignment of the fruit and some cuttings.

The Government accepted the gift with pleasure, the cuttings were planted, and soon the Australians were able to enjoy the fruit to their hearts' content. The cactus that produces the "pear" was found to be exactly suited to the hot, dry Australian climate, and spread and multiplied with extraordinary rapidity, being helped thereto by the colonists themselves, each and everyone of whom was anxious to possess a specimen.

This was thirty years ago. The other day the Australian Commonwealth issued an Order in Council offering a reward of £5,000 for the best method of extirpating the cacti, which has multiplied so enormously as to over-run and render valueless vast tracts of hitherto fairly fertile country. It will be a good thing for the colony if someone comes forward and earns the money; for vast sums have been expended in fighting the pest during the past ten or twelve years, and with very indifferent results.

The Battle of Hastings is bothering Hastings to-day, just as it did eight hundred and odd years ago; only on this occasion it is not the actual conflict, but a huge picture depicting the same, which is the cause of the trouble.

A PICTURE TOO BIG TO HANG.

The gigantic canvas originally came into the possession of the Corporation through the generosity of the Websters, when that family first held possession of Battle Abbey. At the beginning the City Fathers were delighted with the imposing gift, but their pleasure was suddenly damped by the discovery that no wall could be found big enough to receive it. Eventually it was stowed away in the roof of the Market-hall, whence, some years back, it was removed to the cellars of the Brassey Institute.

Now it has been resuscitated, and the Corporation, in order to get out of their difficulty, are proposing to return the historical painting to Sir Augustus Webster, the new owner of the fine old Abbey. At the moment of writing, Sir Augustus' answer is being awaited with considerable interest.

Last summer in Belfast were high jinks over the right of the public to a building known as the Old Brown Linen Hall. For years the hall has been an eyesore as well as a white elephant to the citizens, but it would appear that, under the provisions of an ancient deed of gift, no one has any power to convert it to other uses so long as at least one roll of brown linen is exposed therein for sale on each and every Friday throughout the year.

And this has been done, although for some half-a-century or more no genuine business has been transacted there. Outside the building is falling to decay. Inside is a rank growth of dock leaves and wild springing grass. And amid the ruin sat until recently an old man, Friday after Friday, year after year, offering for sale as a matter of form the same mouldering roll of brown linen.

NO MORE FREE FOOD FOR TRAMPS.

Recently he died; but he left behind him a son, who continued the time-honoured custom. Whether the latter is still there at this present moment the writer cannot say, but he certainly was a few months back; and so long as he continues to pay his periodical visits, with his roll of brown linen under his arm, no power on earth can remove him or enable the city to convert the old building to any other use.

When, more than three centuries ago, pious old Richard Watts of Rochester dowered that ancient borough with an almshouse for the reception and relief, every night throughout the year, of six poor "wayfaring men," he little dreamt that he was presenting his native place with a white elephant of the largest and most unwieldy description. Yet such was the fact, although the nuisance occasioned by the influx of vagrants into the town, to partake of the posthumous hospitality of the benevolent founder of the charity, did not all at once assume serious proportions.

Very early in the last century, however, the number of professional tramps and itinerant out-of-works who invaded the borough night after night increased to an alarming degree. Only six in all could, under the terms of the bequest, be accommodated at the almshouse, and the remainder naturally gravitated towards the workhouse casual wards, sending up the poor rates by leaps and bounds.

Nevertheless, for a long period, the town accepted the situation more or less cheerfully out of respect for the memory of their distinguished citizen; Watts had been Recorder of Rochester, and a personal friend of Queen Elizabeth's. But there came a time at length when something had to be done. Tinkering with the matter was tried at first. It was sought to make stricter the qualifications for admission, to differentiate between the genuine out-of-works and the professional tramps; but matters only went from bad to worse.

In the end the almshouse was abolished, so far as accommodating the casual wayfarer was concerned; and, although the house, with its quaint, old inscription, still stands, the poor traveller will knock in vain for admission. It is said, however, that the "four pennies," which constituted a portion of the dole to each guest, can still be legally claimed from the Mayor for the time being, by any destitute stranger having courage enough to apply for the same.

COLUMBIA MARKET'S TROUBLES.

In 1867 was inaugurated in Bethnal Green, by Lady Burdett-Coutts, Columbia Market. The costers were being driven wholesale from their pitches in the streets by the local authorities, and the philanthropic donor wished to provide them with an alternative site whereon to establish their stalls, and transact their business. It was a beautiful building, designed in the pointed Gothic style, and it cost £200,000.

But it turned out the whitest of white elephants from the very beginning. Quite early in its history, Lady Burdett-Coutts found that she was totally unable to manage it, so she turned it over as a free gift to the Corporation of London. These latter were so pleased that they publicly presented the donor with the freedom of the City. Yet less than eighteen months afterwards they were forced to acknowledge that the whole scheme had turned out a ghastly failure, and that they had no option but to restore the market once more to its originator.

LONDON'S WORST "ELEPHANT."

Since then it has passed through a lengthy series of vicissitudes. It has been in turns a fish market, a meat market, and a vegetable market. At least four railway companies, the Great Eastern, Great Northern, Midland, and North London, have tried vainly to make a success of it in connection with their various systems. It has been seriously proposed to turn it into a co-operative store. In only one respect have its fortunes proved consistent—it never has paid, and it is very doubtful if it ever will.

Perhaps, however, London's most typical white elephant is Leicester Square. For years it was an eyesore and a disgrace to the Metropolis; a waste of old tin cans, dead cats, and all manner of refuse, and the chosen resort of all sorts of disreputable characters by night.

Then, in the summer of 1874, it was bought by by Baron Albert Grant, who had it renovated and presented it to the Metropolitan Board of Works. There was a big flourish of trumpets at the opening ceremony, but, as a matter of fact, the square is practically useless as an open space, while its general aspect is certainly far from pleasing, the seats filled, as they almost invariably are during the hours of daylight, by an unsavoury horde of frowsy tatterdemalions, down upon whose rags gazes inanely the unspeakable effigy of the Bard of Avon.

HE RESPECTED HIS LAST WISHES.

Two cowboys once met on a Texas plain and rode along together.

They were strangers to each other, and their notions as to the merits of right and wrong were about as loose as possible.

Suddenly one of the "boys" made a suspicious movement towards his hip-pocket. Instantly the other drew his revolver and shot him dead.

The "live" boy then dismounted, gazed steadily at his victim and said to himself:

"Now, I wonder if he was really going to shoot me? The evidence was against him, but anyway I'll see for myself."

Turning the body over, he discovered that the only murderous weapon the dead man bore was a whisky-flask; and then in sorrowful tones he said:

"Such a blessed idiot I am! I've killed an innocent man and a perfect gentleman. He wasn't going to shoot me; he merely intended to invite me to have a drink."

As he drew his sleeve across his mouth he continued:

"The last wishes of deceased shall be duly respected."

Then he emptied the flask and went on his way.

She: "He is connected with you in some way by marriage, isn't he?"

He: "Yes. He married my *fiancée*."

Under the main entrance to a church a poor woman, shivering with cold, and holding a baby in her arms, appealed to the charity of the passers-by.

"Why, your infant is of pasteboard!" said a gentleman, as he tapped its nose, which sounded hard and resonant.

"Yes, I know, sir. It is so cold I left the real one at home!"

SHELL FISH FOR THE BAND.

Funny Incidents not on the Programme.

On the second night of *Aladdin* at a large provincial theatre, a strip of canvas, depicting a ravishingly blue Eastern sky, became loose, in some mysterious way, and the hard-edged rim encountering the head of poor Widow Twanky, a male lady of uncertain age, left a bump which interfered sadly with the reposeful lie of his false scalp. Exactly one week later, another accident took place in the same theatre. The inevitable skipper of the caste, in focussing his exaggerated telescope, an instrument with a stretch of some ten feet, caught his first mate violently on the bridge of the nose with the perspective end of the telescope. The audience laughed uproariously, and the victim smiled and looked happy, too, but next evening an understudy took his place, for the injury was sufficiently severe to call for surgical treatment.

While the usual festive "promiscuousity" was occupying the boards of a well-known Metropolitan theatre, one night, the audience were treated to a brace of extraordinary incidents. Approaching the interval, an inhabitant of the pit half-rose and made a valiant effort to throw a bouquet, clear of the rows of heads in front of him, on to the stage. It flew miraculously close to some feminine "sky-scrapers," but it went closer still to the orchestra leader, catching that unsuspecting gentleman sharply on the chin.

Tickled at the idea of a "pitite" presuming to such high-born extravagance, a festive spectator in one of the gallery wings procured a strong slender line and a robust-looking cabbage, and fixing them together he deftly swung the choice plant over the stage, where it landed at the feet of one of the funny men. This gentleman perceived a golden opportunity of making a hit outside the bounds of the libretto, and he was quick to seize it, but not the cabbage, which convulsed the audience by jerking itself over the bald head of a trombone player into the auditorium where it foulel a lady's hat-pin. As neither the vegetable nor the pin would yield, the string did, leaving the luscious fruit behind.

An original adaptation of *Sinbad the Sailor* was being played in a Lancashire theatre, and the scene was one in which the famous traveller is tossed and buffeted by the angry canvas billows, and finally thrown clear of some jagged wooden rocks on to a desolate and presumedly uninhabited island. While engaged corking his hunger with crabs and seaweed, there came on the scene a man in a decidedly hilarious state. He brought with him too strong an odour of liquor to be mistaken for a native of the island, nor did his dress or general aspect suggest the shipwrecked sailor.

He threw the property shell-fish into the orchestra, and evinced a desire to embrace the "sole man saved from the wreck," but Mr. Sinbad, despite an expressed longing a minute before to see a human face, contemptuously declined. The delight of the "gods" was something exquisite when the intruder was seen to pull forth a flask, and coolly perch himself on a rock, which latter, however, being of the spectacular order, collapsed, with the result that the sitter got lost to view in the tropical foliage.

It seemed little short of a miracle how the man could have gained the stage unchallenged, but it subsequently transpired that the intrusion was the outcome of a wager, which to win, no trouble, expense or strong drink had been spared.

The enterprising proprietor of a Scotch hippodrome ran a pantomime after an equestrian display, and by a portable arrangement of poles and canvas, the arena was quickly separated from the rest of the house, and the heavy scenery, which was fixed up in the large domed roof of the building was lowered.

One night, however, the pulley business jammed, and, despite the frenzied efforts of the allied circus hands, the roof of a fine baronial castle absolutely refused to join the main building. The play eventually proceeded without it, and would probably have suffered little in consequence had not the erring roof descended very suddenly of its own accord, flattening the unfinished castle like so many cards. Of course, the audience roared with enjoyment, and many insisted that it was all meant, but their mirth was hardly flattering to the management.

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CHAPTER LXXIII.

"Make Me Your Wife Before I Die!"

THE play must be played. Yet, hard as it was for Gladys and Miss Banting to tear themselves away when the time to leave for the theatre came, it was not so hard as it had been on the previous evening. Keith Leslie was with Esmée. And, knowing that he was nearest and dearest to her, they were comforted a little.

When Esmée awakened Rex was sitting beside the bed. Her sleep, troubled as it had been, had produced a temporary improvement. The temperature was not so high. She was calmer and completely conscious. She gave a little start at the sight of Rex, not quite certain for a moment whether all that had gone before had not been part of a strange, wild dream. Rising, he tenderly brushed the tangled hair off her hot forehead and smiled down bravely into her eyes, despite the heartache within him. He must comfort and cheer her; hide from her the black, shadowy terror that was haunting him. She reached out her right hand. A thin, worn band of gold glistened on the third finger. He took the hand, and, bending down, kissed it.

"Rex," she whispered, "I am so thankful to have seen you again, to have had you near me; but you mustn't stay long. The danger is always here. You must try to get away to safety. You mustn't stay."

"Sweetheart," he answered, "I'm going to stay with you till you are well and strong again. Now, you mustn't think any more about that. Only this, I am quite safe here. I am not going to leave the house until the doctor tells me you're on the right road to recovery!"

He was not speaking the truth, and he knew that well enough. Yet, for the life of him, he could not have spoken otherwise. He could not tell her that every time the muffled knocker sounded out dully his heart sank within him, dreading that it might be the police; of his desperate, inward prayers—much as the Smasher had prayed—that he might be granted just a little longer; how he had racked his brain for some excuse, if the worst came to the worst, that would deceive her. The doctor had told him that everything that could be must be done to soothe and ease her mind. And Stanley, in the face of doubt, not knowing what the next moment might bring forth, was desperately doing his best, though Heaven alone knew what he was suffering, what it all cost him to play the man. But the revulsion came when, on the arrival of Doctor Pringle, he passed into the sitting-room, leaving Esmée with the doctor and the nurse. Limping to the mantelpiece, he covered his face with his hands and cried like a child.

"Spare her!" he choked. "Oh, God, spare her!"

He was still standing by the mantelpiece when the doctor returned into the room and tapped him gently on the shoulder.

"A little improvement," he whispered, "your coming seems to have done her good. But I should be shirking my duty if I kept it from you that her condition is still critical. We have not weathered the corner yet. I shall be coming again to-night."

Outside, Doctor Pringle whispered something to Mrs. Jones, the landlady.

"No, sir," she whispered back, "I've not told a soul outside that the gentleman's here. Though, of course, the ladies and gentlemen that have been here to make inquiries and have come in have seen him."

"That can't be helped," answered the doctor, "and doesn't matter so much."

Doctor Pringle had gleaned something as to the real state of affairs from Esmée's babblings.

"I may get into trouble over this," he muttered as he left the house, "but I want to save her life. And any shock now, any scene——"

The white-haired old gentleman shook his head sorrowfully and blew his nose loudly as he hurried along.

"I am not a police-constable, and if it pleases me to shut my eyes, I certainly shall!"

"Rex," whispered Esmée as he returned to her room, "you've—you've been crying!"

He tried to smile, poor fellow—a very piteous attempt, perhaps more pathetic than tears.

"Why should I, sweetheart?" he said, stroking her head, but not meeting her eyes. "Why, the doctor's just told me that you've improved!"

She coughed. It was a cruel-sounding cough.

"Rex, I—I may not get over this. But I am not afraid. If only I could know that your innocence would be proved! Your—your love has been everything to me. I have never once doubted it, as I know you have never doubted mine. I believe that whatever may happen here on earth, in God's good time we shall be as one in the great For Ever!"

There was a strange yearning look in her eyes, as though there were something more that she had wished to say; but Stanley did not see. He had turned aside his head to hide from her the rebellious tears that he could not conquer.

The nurse returned from the adjoining room.

"Hush," she said quietly, "there mustn't be too much talking."

A long silence followed, only broken by occasional coughing. When Gladys returned from the theatre, Doctor Pringle had been again and gone. Esmée had fallen again into a restless sleep. Stanley was sitting beside the bed. Miss Banting arrived a few minutes later. After that, there was a continual opening of, and whispering at, the front door, as the different members of the company called to inquire. But one man remained behind after the others had sorrowfully gone their different ways, and paced up and down, up and down, throughout the night—Harley Garside.

"You had better go now," whispered the nurse to Stanley.

He obeyed silently. Gladys was in the adjoining room. She handed him his own letter to Esmée—the one he had posted the previous evening. He tore it up mechanically, and put it on the fire. She held another envelope in her hand; but hesitated to give it to him.

"Gladys," he said, drawing out a pocket-case, while the child still stood irresolute, "I want you to lock these up and take great care of them. They belong to—to her. She trusted me with them; but they are hers."

He handed her a bundle of bank-notes.

The child took the notes wonderingly. Why did not Mr. Leslie take care of them himself? Then, with an effort, she handed him the envelope she held. It was scented.

"Miss Delisle asked me to give you this."

She stole out of the room to lock up the notes.

Stanley opened the envelope.

"My dear Rex," it ran, "when may I expect to see you? If not to-night, please call before twelve o'clock mid-day to-morrow. I really can't allow you any more grace than that. If by that time you haven't called, you must be prepared to take the consequences.—ZOE."

He crushed the letter up in his hand fiercely and threw it into the fire. At such a time to have written a letter like that—to threaten to betray him when the woman he loved lay hovering between life and death! He did not pause to wonder how she had learnt his secret. The inhumanity, the venom, the degradation of it all maddened him; yet he could not bring himself to believe that, degraded, shameless as she was, she would carry out her threat. Should he write? There must be some spark of humanity in the woman! He hesitated; then limped to a little writing-desk in a corner of the room.

Mrs. Jones posted the letter for him.

Dawn was breaking when the nurse stole into the sitting-room, to find Stanley still there, his head upon his hands.

"You must get some sleep," she whispered; "it's madness, this. Miss Conyers seems no worse, and is still sleeping. You must take the opportunity now."

He crawled away mechanically to the little room wherein Mrs. Jones had made him up a makeshift bed. He lay down dressed as he was.

* * * * *

"Mr. Leslie, wake up—wake up!"

Stanley opened his eyes with a start. Sleep, the sleep of utter exhaustion, had been upon him. For a moment his mind was a blank. Then he realised that it was the nurse who was bending over him. He gave a frightful cry.

"Oh, God! No——"

"Miss Conyers is worse. She's delirious again. You must come!"

* * * * *

Though he held her in his arms, though he whispered that he was there, that he would not leave her, she did not know him, and kept calling for Rex to come to her!

Then she seemed to be drifting downstream in a punt with him, and whispered words of love and happiness!

Then she cried out that he was reprieved and his life spared!

Then it was Aylingford and the death trap!

Then a pawnshop, and she was pawning a heart-shaped pendant!

Then it was a letter, a letter that she must get back, must get back, must get back!

Then she was helping Scott to escape; then facing Gilderoy with a revolver!

"Where's Rex, where's Rex, where's Rex? Have they taken him? Why doesn't he come to me? They must be keeping him from me—holding him back. Come to me, come to me, my own beloved!"

"Beloved, I'm here—you're in my arms, Amy—close, close to my heart!" whispered the stricken man. The others in the room, surroundings were as nought to him!

The wild, staring, unseeing eyes awakened now with a look of recognition.

"Is that you, Rex, my own beloved? Oh, God be thanked! Rex, Rex"—the delirium had yielded to consciousness—"make me your wife before I die!"

CHAPTER LXXIV.

In which Crump Proves himself to be an Unorthodox Detective, and Behaves in a most Unprofessional Manner.

IT was a few minutes past one o'clock when Crump, having left Stackton Junction at ten-twenty on Friday morning, alighted at Wokehampton. The little man was looking a trifle sad and depressed when he arrived at the police-station and asked for Chief Constable Burleigh.

"I got your wires, Crump," said the chief when they were alone together; "but neither of my men had anything special to report. Your message was a bit ambiguous, so I thought I'd wait till you came. However, I've doubled the look-out. I'm afraid Miss Conyers is very seriously ill. A nurse is in attendance; but from my men's reports the doctor, the nurse, and one or two members of the company are the only persons who have entered the place. Garside spends most of the day and night hanging about outside. He seems terribly upset."

"Perhaps," said Crump, with some hesitation and a guilty expression, "I ought to have wired more implicit instructions and told you to search the place without waiting for me. I fancy that the man I want managed somehow to dodge your men, and is in the house—of course, I may be wrong." He paused for a moment, looking decidedly uncomfortable. "To tell you the truth, Burleigh, this job is not at all to my liking. There is a sad element, peculiarly so, about the whole business. You will think me terribly unprofessional, I know; but, if we catch him, he goes back to complete a life-sentence, and the woman he loves is lying desperately ill. I don't think the law will have been balked to any great extent if the poor fellow has been allowed a few extra hours of grace. Theoretically, perhaps, I ought to have worded my wires more strongly, so as to have insured an immediate searching of the place. However, if, in consequence of my conduct, we lose him, I'm prepared to take the sole blame and responsibility on my own shoulders. But I fancy we've as good as got him."

Chief Constable Burleigh eyed Crump with a curious little twinkle.

"Yes, Crump," he said, "I don't think you've acted quite professionally; but you've never had the reputation of being orthodox in your methods—the reason, some of us fancy, of your remarkable successes. Your conduct does credit to your humanity. What's your next move?"

Crump sighed.

"I suppose," he said, "I had better be getting round there. You might let me have a couple of men—not that I anticipate any trouble. I'm not dealing with a gentleman of the Smasher's propensity and capacity. Dear me! I'm quite dreading this business, Burleigh!"

"You seem pretty confident he is there, Crump. Mind you, there's no back entrance to the place, and I've had two of my smartest men on to the job."

"Don't think I'm insinuating anything against your men; but we're all of us human. I may be hopelessly wrong; but I fancy Stanley is in that house."

A knock on the door, and a constable entered with a note marked "private," and addressed in a woman's writing to the Chief of the Wokehampton police. Opening it, Burleigh read the brief contents; then whistled.

"By jove, Crump, it looks very much as if you're right. Read that!"

"If," ran the note, "you want Stanley, the escaped convict, you will find him at 33 Orton Street, where he arrived yesterday, and is passing under the name of Keith Leslie."

Crump jerked the letter back to Burleigh.

"Ugh!" he grunted contemptuously, "a jealous woman! But it certainly does look as if I were right. Well, I must put the matter to the test. I must be going, Burleigh. A cab, I think."

The cab that carried Crump and two men in plain clothes to Orton Street stopped some little distance from the house with the muffled knocker. Beyond, on the same side, stood a little group of men and women. The clean-shaven faces and general appearance of the men proclaimed them to be actors.

"Well," whispered Sam Blobbs chokingly, "let's be thankful that the dear laddie's with her. I—I saw a clergyman go in just now. But—but while there's life there's hope. Laddie, laddie, bear up!"

He clutched Garside by the arm and saved him from falling; then led him staggeringly away from the little group, and incoherently whispered words of hope and consolation. Their backs were turned as a little man, carrying one arm in a sling, reached the house. He gave a sigh at the sight of the muffled knocker; then rapped very gently. Unfortunately, duty was duty, and must be done.

Mrs. Jones, traces of tears on her face, opened the door.

"Mr. Keith Leslie is here," whispered Crump.

"Well, sir——"

"Yes; he is here. I want to see him on a matter of importance. If he is—is engaged, I do not wish to hurry him. There is no need to tell him anyone's here if he is privately engaged. But I shall be obliged to come in and wait."

Crump stepped into the passage quietly.

"You can't see him," whispered the woman tremulously, "he's—he's with the young lady—poor dear, poor dear! You'd better go—you'd better go!"

"Hush, my good woman! I'm here in the name of the law. You can help me to make matters a little less painful than they might be."

"A police officer!" gasped Mrs. Jones; "but you haven't come for him now—now, when he's with her—now——"

Crump nodded his head.

"But we will spare him," he whispered, "as much as possible. Don't say anything to anybody why I'm here. Where is he?"

"He's in the bedroom through there—but you're not going to take him now?"

"Is the doctor here?"

"Yes; either in the next room or the bedroom!"

"I will speak to him. Hush, my good woman, I shall spare all the pain I can! Not a word! You stay here!"

Crump noiselessly opened the sitting-room door and stepped in quietly.

Miss Banting was sitting, her head bowed forward, Gladys kneeling beside, her face buried in her lap. Doctor Pringle, his head also bowed, stood near the half-opened bedroom door. He glanced up as Crump entered, and realised instinctively. He held up his hand in an appeal for silence. There was no need for him to have done so.

"'Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her so long as ye both shall live?'"

Coming from the room beyond, the words, spoken in a low solemn voice, had reached Crump. His homely face twitched all over. He sat down on a chair, and, bending forward, shaded his eyes with his hand. Then a great, shining tear trickled down his nose and fell on to the carpet. Then another, and another.

For the first time since Crump had entered the room Gladys looked up. She could not see his face; but the man's figure seemed familiar to her. She did not try to

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reason out who he was, or why he was there; but buried her face again.

The words of the marriage service, broken now and again by a silence, telling of responses inaudibly whispered, were still coming from the adjoining room. Stanley stood beside the bed whereon Esmée half-lay, propped up by pillows. His feelings had passed beyond the stage of outward expression. The haggard, grey face wore a look almost of calm. The wild, piteous glitter had gone from Esmée's eyes, in its place was shining a strange light of joy. She would be his wife now. More than four years back she had refused—for his sake; but a few weeks back he had denied her—for her sake. But now they were being made man and wife in the eyes of God! It would be easier to die now!

The grey-haired clergyman took a step towards them and joined their right hands together.

"'For better, for worse . . . in sickness and in health . . . to love and to cherish . . . till death us do part.'"

The broken sentences reached the others in the room beyond.

Esmée drew off the worn gold ring that gleamed on her right hand and gave it to Rex.

"'With this ring I thee wed . . . I thee endow . . . Amen.'"

Then, after a little while:

"'Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder!'"

And Crump, waiting in the next room and hearing the words, shifted restlessly on his chair.

A little more; then to those in the adjoining room there seemed to be a silence; but Rex had folded Esmée in his arms, and she, looking up into his eyes, whispered:

"My husband!"

A few moments later the clergyman left the bedroom. He was looking deeply moved. He whispered a few words to the doctor; then passed out. Crump had raised his head now, and Gladys, looking up, recognised him, though his face was no longer swollen and bandaged. It was the little man she had met in Mrs. Gullet's rooms when she visited them to recover her blotter. What was he doing here? Doctor Pringle moved across to him on tip-toe.

"What do you want?" he whispered, yet already divining; "who are you?"

"Detective-Inspector Crump, of Scotland Yard, and I want Reginald Stanley, alias Keith Leslie," whispered back Crump. "You're the doctor. I'm anxious to give him all the time I can. How's Miss Conyers?"

"It's a case of life or death. A shock now, the knowledge that you are here to take him away, would kill her. Even now—— For God's sake, man, be merciful!"

"Doctor," whispered Crump, "I want a few words with you alone. Would you ask the ladies to leave us together?"

Doctor Pringle whispered something to Gladys and Miss Banting. Wonderingly, reluctantly, sadly, they left the room.

"One minute. I must see my patient first!"

The doctor returned from the bedroom after a few minutes.

"She's happier, her mind's more at rest, and consequently she's a shade better. We may save her; but—you're here, man, you're here!"

Crump thrust a forefinger through a buttonhole of the doctor's coat.

"Doctor," he said quietly, "when it is a case of life and death, I'm prepared to run the risk of cheating the law out of a few hours of its dues. You are a doctor of some repute, I presume? Your name, your certificate would carry weight?"

"What do you mean, sir? I've been in practice in Wokehampton for twenty-five years, and have held public appointments that included medical officer of heath, and at the present moment I'm honorary medical adviser to the Wokehampton police force."

Crump's face brightened perceptibly.

"You mustn't get cross with me," he whispered in tones of mild remonstrance, "I was merely asking for information. Reginald Stanley, I have gathered, has not recovered from the terrible injuries he sustained when passing under the name of Keith Leslie. Now, doctor, with your past record and the fact that you are honorary medical adviser to the Wokehampton police force, a certificate, written and signed by you, to the effect that Reginald Stanley is in an unfit condition to be removed from here at the present moment, will carry great weight with me; in fact, in the face of such a certificate, signed by a man of your reputation, perhaps corroborated by another medical practitioner summoned in consultation, I shall be compelled to postpone removing my prisoner! I shall be compelled, I say, in the face of expert and scientific evidence, to postpone removing my prisoner, though I shall be responsible for his safe custody until such time as he shall be in a fit state to be handed over to His Majesty's prison authorities."

The last part of Crump's speech had been whispered in a stern, official, I-arrest-you-in-the-name-of-the-law manner.

Doctor Pringle, like Crump, was a little man. The two little men looked each other straight in the eyes.

"And if we," said Doctor Pringle in his most professional manner, "after duly examining Stanley, find that he is in an unfit state to be removed, we shall most assuredly write and sign a certificate to that effect, and in the event of that certificate not satisfying the requirements of the law, then we shall take steps to insure corroborative testimony"—then his whole manner changed, and he held out his hand. "God bless you!"

Crump shook the hand heartily.

"Doctor," he whispered, "we're a pair of humbugs—but it's in a good cause."

"You're a man," whispered the cherubic-faced little doctor, shaking his hand again; "this may save her life. This may make all the difference. It has been most pathetic throughout. When the poor girl expressed the wish that the marriage service should be gone through, I had practically given up all hope. Now there is a distinct change for the better; but to separate them now—God bless you, Mr. Crump, you're a man—not a detective!"

"My enemies," whispered Crump, smiling a little, "have always said that of me. But, doctor, we must keep this matter quiet. We do not want gaping crowds round the house where Stanley is lying in custody. And I must notify Stanley as soon as possible that he is under arrest. I should like you to be present, please, and you will be very careful to close the bedroom door."

Doctor Pringle passed into the bedroom. Esmée had fallen asleep in Stanley's arms. A look of peace was on the thin, white face. The pulse was not so rapid, the temperature lower, the breathing less laboured.

"A little improvement!" whispered the doctor; then, with hesitation: "There's someone to see you in the next room, Mr. Leslie. You must be prepared; but——"

Stanley had realised. He shivered—that was all!

"But, as a medical man, I shall certify that you're not in a fit state to be removed at present."

Stanley tenderly drew the sleeping figure in his arms a little closer to him and kissed the hot forehead.

"When she wakes and asks for me," he whispered, like a man speaking in his sleep, "what will you say to her? Surely, surely, they won't take me away from you now, Amy, my wife—my wife!"

Again he kissed the hot forehead; then gently laid her back among the pillows. Then, sinking down on his knees beside the bed, he prayed. He rose up with difficulty, and once again bent over the bed.

"Nurse!" whispered the doctor.

The nurse had been standing by the window, her back turned. She moved to the bed and sat down beside it quietly.

"Take my arm!" whispered the doctor.

Stanley did so mechanically. The strain of rush and travel had told upon his limbs. Not that he was conscious of any pain. His soul was in a state of numbness now. Holding the doctor's arm, he limped through into the next room. The doctor closed the door.

"Reginald Stanley," said Crump quietly, "you're my prisoner."

"But I," said Doctor Pringle, "protest against his being removed in his present condition, detective."

Stanley glanced from one to the other.

Did it mean a little longer?—a little longer near the woman he loved! A little longer, long enough for the question to be answered—life or death?

"Reginald Stanley," said Crump, "in view of the doctor's statement, there is no immediate hurry."

Stanley sank into a chair.

"Absolutely unfit to be removed," said the doctor authoritatively.

Only a respite—but a respite!

"I insist on Mr. Leslie going to bed at once," said Doctor Pringle.

"Very good!" answered Crump, "I will assist you to take him to his room."

Together they assisted him to the room where the bed had been made up for him. Stanley submitted dazedly. The doctor helped him to undress and into bed. His ankles had swollen so, it was necessary to cut away boots and socks.

"Now," said Crump, "it's impossible for me to leave my prisoner. Doctor, will you please give the landlady orders that no one except those living in the house are to be admitted, and impress on her the absolute necessity of keeping her mouth closed? You would oblige me further if you would ask one of the two men who are in a cab outside to come here to me."

"I will see to these things for you!" answered Doctor Pringle and left the room.

Crump approached the bed.

"Reginald Stanley," he said quietly, "this has been a very grievous business to me. So long as you are here you will be kept under observation, day and night. But I shall take it on myself to give you an opportunity of occasionally seeing Miss Cunning—that is, Mrs. Stanley."

Stanley looked at him gratefully.

"If only," he whispered hoarsely, "I could know that her life were out of danger! If only I could know that the news of this would not reach her till she were strong enough to bear it!"

"We shall do our best for you."

Crump sat down beside the bed. His face assumed an expression of brown study. He needed all his diplomacy and resource. Presently the door opened, and one of the men who had accompanied him from the station entered.

"Ah, Coltson, we've got our man; but Doctor Pringle assures me it would be criminal to attempt to remove him in his present condition."

The man glanced at Stanley's grey-lined, haggard face. It seemed to corroborate the statement.

"I'm going to leave him in your custody for a time. I have many things to see to."

Rising, he drew the man on one side and whispered:

"Poor chap, he won't give you any bother. He's practically a cripple. It's hardly necessary to tell you that I want this business kept quiet. We don't want crowds round the place."

"Very good, Mr. Crump."

Crump left the room, and, after having interviewed Mrs. Jones, asked to see Miss Banting and Gladys. He did not beat about the bush. Not understanding, they were much more liable to talk than knowing all. He left them wondering if their ears had played them false, but pledged to secrecy. Then he drove away in the cab to the police-station. After a long interview with Burleigh, he dispatched a number of telegrams to Scotland Yard, one notifying the arrest of Reginald Stanley, the escaped convict from Bleakmoor Prison, with an urgent request that, and reasons why, the news should be at present withheld from the Press. The other telegrams dealt with the other important matter in hand.

It was dark when he returned on foot to Orton Street. And again the idea that had occurred to him and had been suppressed, when, on the previous day, he was driving to Euston, returned. When he had read of the disaster at Aylingford to Keith Leslie he had never dreamt then that Keith Leslie was Reginald Stanley. And he was wondering now whether the coroner's jury at Aylingford had been right in imputing the crime to the actor, Radstone? In the letter taken from Jacob Monk's shop, the writer—Stanley—had stated his belief in R.'s innocence, though he could give no definite reasons. Jealousy, professional and personal, were the motives ascribed to Radstone. But might not someone else in the company have been jealous? What about Garside, who, according to the reports Crump had lately received, hovered day and night outside the house where Esmée lay? And—the little man's thoughts had taken the bit between their teeth, and he could not rein them in—and Garside was closely associated in villainy with Austyn Selincourt, and Rex Stanley stood between Selincourt and wealth.

"It's improbable," he muttered, "but not impossible. And, after all, I'm entitled to my thoughts and theories provided that they don't lead me into making an ass of myself."

It would have seemed far less improbable to him could he have known the facts concerning a certain handkerchief, red and dotted with white spots, that was still in the possession of Cully Scott, alias the Smasher!

Then his thoughts reverted to another matter that would require investigation. How had Stanley obtained his position in the company? There had been connivance somewhere. That he had escaped on the train carrying the *Fettered Lives* company and subsequently appeared as an actor in the company was something more than coincidence.

Again Crump thought of the letter.

"G.," he muttered, "does that G. represent Garside or Gilderoy. I rather incline, taking everything into consideration, particularly that Scott-Nelson business, to stage-manager Gilderoy. Stanley is arrested, right enough; but there is a great deal that I should like to see cleared up. But my hands are very full. As it is, I feel very uncomfortable at being away from London."

On entering the house he found Doctor Pringle there.

"Well, doctor?"

"My patient is awake. I told her that he was lying down, resting. If she goes on as she is doing I hope before twenty-four hours have passed to pronounce her out of danger!"

"That," said Crump, his face brightening all over, "is indeed good news. Then, in that case, in about twenty-four hours' time I'm afraid Stanley will have recovered sufficiently to be removed. I don't want to be hard, but—my duty!"

The little man coughed.

"I am now going to relieve my man and take charge of Stanley personally. If, doctor—it rests of course with you—Chief Constable Burleigh assured me that Stanley could not be in more competent hands—if you thought he would be more comfortable in here"—it was the sitting-room adjoining Esmée's bedroom—"by all means let him be moved in here!"

* * * * *

"Rex, the doctor tells me I shall get well now!"

"Yes, beloved, thank God!"

Crump was in the adjoining room. He had allowed his prisoner to hobble out of sight.

The twenty-four hours had passed. Esmée had turned the corner. Stanley had circled an arm round her; her head rested on his shoulder. There were alone together.

"Rex, and now that I'm better, I—I want you to go. I should feel happier, I should get better more quickly, if I knew that you were in safety. And I'm going to get better ever so quickly, and then I shall come to you!"

"Beloved!" he whispered chokingly, thinking of the man waiting for him in the next room, "won't you think me a coward if I leave you now—go away from you?"

"No, my husband, no!"

"But—but supposing I should be taken! Amy, Amy, you wouldn't grieve too much, would you? You would know that I was—was well, and that I am always, always hoping, believing, that one day the truth will come out. And that I should always be thinking of you—of you, my beloved wife in the sight of God! And that the knowledge of your great love would give me strength, and that memories cannot be taken away from a man. And there would be times when we could see one another!"

"Rex—Rex!" She was gazing up into his face with dilated eyes.

He drew her closer to him so that she could not see his eyes, and then told a great lie, to be recorded and perhaps blotted out after by the Recording Angel's tear.

"No, no, love, I'm only supposing. You see I must look things in the face, and it might happen."

"You were only supposing?"

"Only supposing"—he stroked her hair gently, and the hand was quite steady—"I had made my plans before I knew that you were ill. Oh, my darling, you never told me a word!"

"But I'm better now, Rex. Tell me your plans!"

"I planned then to go to Westpool. I should have seen you again, been with you—then I should have taken a ship."

"Rex, you will leave here to-night—for my sake, you will go! Will—will it be very long before I hear from you?"

"It might be a fortnight, three weeks; but no news will be good news!"

"Rex"—it was a cry—"I love you, I love you! But you must go, you must go!"

"It is your wish, beloved?"

"Yes! To-night! But don't leave me now; stay with me!"

"Yes; I'm only going to leave you for a few moments. See, here's the nurse! I must arrange one or two little matters. But I'm coming back in a minute!"

He could not trust himself. Another moment he must have betrayed himself. When he reached the next room he sank into a chair, and, covering his face with his hands, rocked to and fro in silent agony!

Crump looked sorely distressed. He half-rose out of

The girl on SHORT STORIES cover is unique. Get the paper and see for yourself.

his chair, only to sink back again. He realised the hopelessness of trying to do or say anything under the circumstances. There are times when the kindest act is to leave a man alone.

That morning, when Doctor Pringle had announced Esmée to be out of danger, Crump had told Stanley that he must prepare himself to travel, that night, to London. He had made his arrangements, and hoped to get his prisoner out of the town without anyone, excepting those already in the secret, being the wiser. A cab, containing two "plain clothes" men, would drive up after dusk. Crump would assist Stanley into it. A carriage would be reserved for them on the London express. A vehicle would be waiting at the far end to convey them to a police-station, where Stanley would await the arrival of the prison officials—then back to Bleakmoor!

For a few moments Stanley rocked to and fro in silence; then he returned again to Esméo's side. Her eyes lighted up at the sight of him. He took her hand in his. For a long while they did not speak.

"Rex," she whispered at last, "I'm so happy to think that I'm your wife now. It will help me after you're gone. And, who knows? Perhaps, one day, all will end rightly."

"I pray so!" he answered.

"Rex! when are you—you going?"

"There's a train about seven o'clock. A cab will be here about half-past six!"

"I believe your coming, Rex, saved my life," she whispered.

Then there was another long silence.

In the next room Crump glanced at the clock, and fervently hoped that they were making the most of their time. His responsibility would soon be over now, and he was thankful. But for the kindliness of his heart, he would have been back in London before this. He stared musingly into the fire. He was a fine judge of character, and Stanley had impressed him. He recalled the details of the Dunnavon murder, so far as he could remember them. Stanley had been condemned on purely circumstantial evidence. Then his mind harked away to a certain conversation that had taken place in "The Cock and Feathers" when Paul Ruddock had been mentioned, and Mr. Peck had stated that he was a natural son of Sir Ronald Dunnavon; Paul Ruddock, whose suicide Crump had never looked upon as absolutely proved; Paul Ruddock, the one-time friend of Selincourt. And again his thoughts took the bit between their teeth and galloped away, and he found himself wondering what Paul Ruddock was doing on the night of Sir Ronald Dunnavon's murder.

Doctor Pringle entered the room.

"Doctor," said Crump, "by to-morrow evening this business will be in the papers. You will see that your patient is not allowed any newspapers, I presume!"

"I have given the nurse strict orders. I am now going to see my patient. Then I shall remain here till—till you and he have gone!"

It was just upon half-past six when the sounds of a cab drawing up outside reached Stanley as he sat beside Esmée. The door was closed. In the adjoining room were Crump, Doctor Pringle, and the nurse. Crump's little bag was on the table, his hat in his hand.

The muffled knocker sounded out dully. Mrs. Jones, opening the front door, was confronted by Zoe Delisle.

"How's Miss Conyers?" she asked, "and Mr. Leslie?"

"Both are a little better, miss. Miss Conyers' improvement continues."

"Is Mr. Leslie leaving to-night?"

"Yes, miss!"

Miss Delisle moved away; but before Mrs. Jones could close the door Gilderoy strode up. His appearance suggested that he had lost flesh. His features were flabby and grey. As he passed the cab he had glanced in, and caught a glimpse of two men within. His voice was a little shaky as he asked almost the same question as Zoe Delisle, and received the same answer.

Zoe Delisle was pacing up and down some little distance away from the front door, waiting. At first it had all been utterly incomprehensible. The letter Stanley had written her, asking her to be merciful, not for his sake, but for the sake of the woman who was lying between life and death, had been as oil on flames. She had waited till Friday mid-day; then had deliberately dispatched the anonymous note to the police. Yet, when she reached the theatre that evening there was no news of a sensational arrest. Had her note gone astray, or been looked upon as a hoax? She had tried to "pump" Gladys; but the child had baffled her. Her jealous, depraved nature had been inflamed more fiercely than ever at the thoughts of Esméo and Stanley being all the while together. Again and again she had called to make inquiries.

On one occasion she had seen a little man, with his arm in a sling, in the act of entering. She had questioned Mrs. Jones, and that lady had answered rather confusedly that he was a gentleman who had business with Mr. Leslie. Then Zoe Delisle had come to the conclusion that her letter had been attended to. And now that she, like Gilderoy, had caught a glimpse of two men sitting well back in the cab that was to carry Stanley away, she felt certain.

The sitting-room door opened, and Miss Banting and Gladys crept into the room.

"Beloved!" whispered Stanley, "God bless you! God take care of you! My own, own wife!"

"You will write to me, husband! But I shan't expect to hear from you for some time, and I shall be brave and not afraid. And I'm going to get well ever so quickly!"

A few minutes of silence, a few whispered words, a woman's choking sob, a man's laboured breathing——

And then a discordant piano-organ outside suddenly started to jingle out the air of a song known to both of them—"Good-bye!" Only a few chords; then it stopped abruptly.

The bedroom door opened. Stanley stood on the threshold—an old man. Those in the room saw him glance back with a look that none there would ever forget. Then he reeled unsteadily forward.

The front door opens quietly. Within, Miss Banting, Gladys, and the nurse are with Esmée. Stanley passes out between Crump and Doctor Pringle. A man springs out of the cab. In the distance, Gilderoy is watching. A woman hurries up. It is Zoe Delisle!

"Oh, Mr. Leslie, I can't let you go without saying good-bye!"

It is the consummation of her revenge. She stretches out her hand.

Stanley makes no reply; seems not to see or hear her.

But Crump jumps at a conclusion.

"Out of the way, you baggage!" he whispers savagely, and pushes her on one side.

The cab rolls away.

Keith Leslie's brief career is at an end. He is Reginald Stanley again, prisoner and convict, on his way back to Bleakmoor!

(To be continued.)

[A New Story by the author of "Fettered Lives" begins in a few weeks. Tell your friends about it.]

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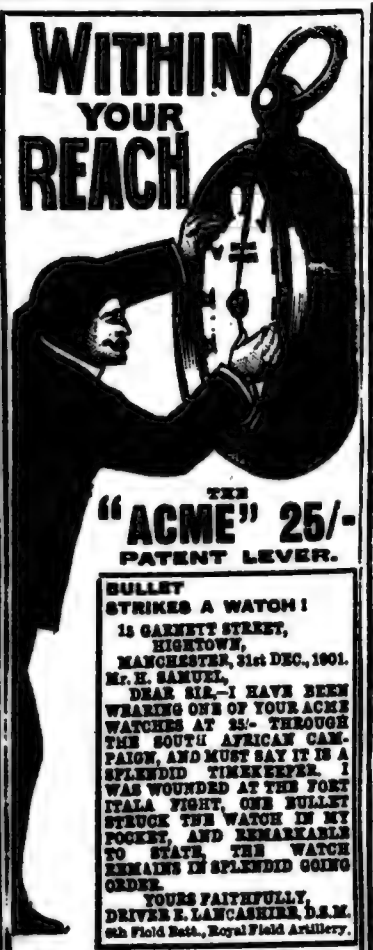

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Elect Cocoa

ISOBEL will be glad to answer questions of general interest upon household matters so far as space permits. A pretty pencil-case will be given to each reader whose inquiry is dealt with on this page. Envelopes should be marked HOME NOTES PAGE.

For Chilblains. Apply ordinary washing blue and you will have speedy relief. This is also useful in cases of burns and scalds when the skin is not broken. The correspondent who writes this has proved the remedy to be good after trying many other things. (*Thanks to* ILKESTON.)

Cocoanut Pudding. Mix three ounces of grated cocoanut with four ounces of breadcrumbs, three ounces of sugar, half-a-pint of milk and two well-beaten eggs. Pour the mixture into a buttered pie-dish, set some bits of butter on the top and bake in a moderate oven. Turn out and sift sugar over before serving. (*Reply to* BEDFORD.)

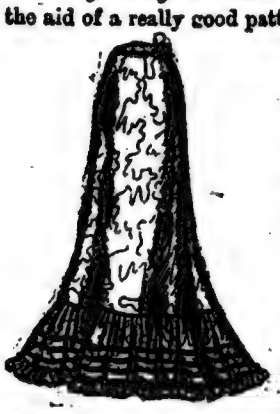
When Baking Cakes you can tell if they are done by pushing a clean skewer, or a bright knife into the centre of the cake, if it comes out quite clean and bright the cake is done. A cake that is done will always have shrunk a little from the sides of the tin at the top. If your cakes are greasy when cooking it is because the oven is not hot enough when they are first put into it. After the first thirty minutes the oven need not be so hot. (*Reply to* SALE.)

To Cure Smoking Lamps take off the burner, set it in a sauce-pan, cover with hot water, add a little soda, and some soap cut small. Let all boil, then add fresh soda water and boil again. Rinse in plenty of hot soda water and set on a piece of paper over the stove to thoroughly dry. The oil vessel should also be emptied, washed, and dried. Set all together properly, put in a new piece of wick, and see that the lamp glass fits down tightly. With a lamp wick trimmed carefully, and the above precautions taken, a smoky lamp will be a stranger in any household. (*Reply to* J. BROOKS.)

This Manitoba Chutney Recipe is sent by a correspondent, who says it is mild and easily made. Boil together one quart of chopped onions with the same quantity of peeled and chopped apples, a quarter of a pound of salt, one pound of Demerara sugar, and one pint of vinegar. Cook till everything is quite tender, adding more vinegar till one quart is used. Then work in half-a-pound of mustard seed, one teaspoonful of turmeric, and stir till all is thoroughly mixed and it boils up. Set in jars, cover lightly, and after a fortnight the chutney will be fit for use. (*Thanks to* A. G. M.)

Celery as a Cure for Rheumatism. Take two heads of celery, scrape and free them from dirt, cut each piece into one inch lengths and set in an enamelled sauce-pan with just sufficient water to cover, then take two lemons, cut off the rind thinly, and add to the celery. Remove the pith and throw it away, but the whole fruit slice into the celery. Simmer gently for ten hours, adding boiling water as it evaporates away. Strain through a hair sieve. One teacupful of this juice should be taken each morning the first thing on rising. My correspondent says she has greatly benefited by this dose. (*Thanks to* DUNDEE.)

Why Buy a Ready-Made Skirt when with the aid of a really good pattern you can make one quite easily yourself? But of course it isn't much use having a paper pattern if you don't know how to use it. That is the advantage of having HOME NOTES patterns; you will always find in the same issue full directions for their use. The pattern of a Spring Petticoat, shown in the margin, is given away with every copy of HOME NOTES this week. To carry out this design you will require two and a half yards of twenty-six inch moreen, some ribbon velvet for trimming, and alpaca for lining frill, etc. Space will not permit further particulars, but you will see them in the aforementioned little paper.



The Scraps on your Screen will be sure to come off if the whole surface is not covered once or twice with a good varnish. (*Reply to* D. R.)

Light Oak may be stained to a darker colour, by painting it over several times with a solution of carbonate of soda and water. I have darkened new carved work in this way till it matched the old furniture. (*Reply to* G. W. C. K.)

The Marking Ink Recipe in issue of February 13th through a great error was inserted under a wrong head, being "To Remove Ink." I am heartily sorry for the error of heading, and feel vaccination and its ills are my only excuse. I feel confident that every reader will recognise in it a marking ink recipe, and not an extractor of marks!

How to Choose Fish. It should be bright red about the gills and eyes, not dull and brown. It should not be knocked about or bruised; the scales should all be there. Never buy fish out of season, however cheap it may be. In choosing shell-fish the great thing to consider is the weight in proportion to size. Fresh fish is never limp; when taken up by the head the whole fish will be stiff to touch. (*Reply to* JEFF.)

Bacon Rolly-Poly would be a dish to suit you and is far more economical than fried bacon, so generally served. Make some light pastry with suet or dripping, roll out to one-eighth inch thickness and spread with thin slices of bacon. Make a seasoning of powdered sage, a little chopped onion, pepper and salt, and scatter over the bacon. Roll up, wet the edges, tie in a cloth and boil steadily for two hours. (*Reply to* R. V.)

Spanish Soup is a useful dish. Take two quarts of liquor in which any salt meat has been boiled and set on the fire in a clean, bright stew-pan. Add to this three pints of chestnuts peeled and skinned, some onions, and a little thyme. When the chestnuts are half-cooked, add six potatoes and two turnips. Cook all thoroughly, pass through a sieve, return to the sauce-pan, bring to the boil and serve. Add two tablespoonfuls of vinegar and a little grated cheese before serving.

Respecting the Using of Onions to Absorb the Smell of Paint a correspondent writes that from experience she has found the onions prove highly poisonous if not destroyed each evening, when fresh ones are put in their places. The used onions should be burnt on a strong fire in the kitchen range. The correspondent says she twice had several cases of illness in her house from using onions in this way, and leaving them about when stale. (*Thanks to* A. H. HOHMS.)

Veal Cake. Take about one pound of cold roast veal, remove all fat and bone, and cut it into thin slices or dice and add two hard boiled eggs. Grease a plain mould and put into it layers of veal, egg and sliced ham, with chopped parsley and pepper between each layer, until the mould is nearly full. Next procure some good stock and flavour it with lemon or tarragon, mace, and pepper. Pour this over the other ingredients in the mould till it is quite full. Bake for half-an-hour. When the mould is quite cold, turn out the contents and serve. (*Reply to* ERCONION.)

My Ginger Wine recipe must be repeated once again, as so many readers desire it. This recipe is especially easy to carry out, as all the ingredients are put together without cooking. To each gallon of cold water add three pounds and a quarter of loaf sugar, one pound and a half of bruised ginger, two lemons, two oranges, and one sweet orange. Pare the fruit very thinly, squeeze out all the juice; put the juice and peel into a barrel, also one ounce of split raisins to every gallon. Do not fill the cask at first, and stir it well till the sugar is dissolved (two or three days), then add a little yeast. Do not stir again, but in about a week fill the cask and cork it up. This will be ready to bottle in three or four months. (*Reply to* E. E. C.)

Cold Boiled Fish with Lemons is a good Scotch dish and one that should be better known. Take three haddocks weighing about three pounds in all. Boil carefully with an onion and season with pepper, salt and ginger. Squeeze the juice of three lemons into a bowl. Beat the eggs together in a basin and strain the lemon juice into them, also add a tablespoonful of chopped parsley; add sufficient liquor from the fish to this to make it measure a pint. Return all to a sauce-pan and stir over a slow fire till it thickens but does not boil. Set the fish in a deep dish for serving, skin it and pour over the sauce. Scatter browned bread crumbs over and serve cold. N.B.—Eels prepared in this way are most tasty. (*Thanks to* NETHERGATE.)

Isobel

HOLIDAYS FOR 1902.		1901. DEC.	1902. JAN.	FEBRUARY.	MARCH.	APRIL.	MAY.
Good Friday	*March 28.*	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25
Easter Monday	*March 31.*	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26
Whitsun Monday	*May 19.*	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27
Coronation Day	*June 26.*	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28
Bank Holiday	*August 4.*	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29
Christmas Day	*December 25.*	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30
Boxing Day	*December 26.*	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31

LOVE PROBLEMS.

Solved by MADGE MORRIS.

A charming little pencil-case will be given to every reader who suggests a Love Problem that is answered in this column. Address your problems to me on post-cards only.

No. 11.—A girl, aged twenty-three, has met many men, without ever falling in love. Her parents wish her to marry a widower of forty, who is agreeable and wealthy. Should she consent?

If a girl has reached the age of twenty-three, and has met many men without ever feeling drawn towards one of them, I think one may safely put her down as practical, and perhaps rather cold. Of course, had she met but few men, that would be different. She has, let us say, been moving about socially, at dances, parties, and the like since seventeen, and, if pretty, is almost certain to have received a good many attentions. These she has accepted and allowed to pass by without being disturbed in mind.

Now, if I were asked to suggest the best second marriage for a widower of forty, I do not think I could do better than single out this very girl. I have known a good many such matches, and can say from personal observation that they are among the happiest ever made.

A girl at twenty-three must have thought a good deal over the question of marriage. If she is pretty and socially attractive, she is scarcely likely to have any New Womanish ideas against entering the state. She is, therefore, marriageable, but as yet no one has arrived on the scene towards whom she has had any feeling, though she has met many young men. It is quite possible that this girl is not a young man's girl. The "young man" idea, so prevalent with others, has not the same degree of fascination for her. Therefore, one might quite easily predict that marriage with a struggling young man of slender means would not be particularly happy for her.

She would most likely look upon the problem of making both ends meet as a very great bore. She has herself been used to a good home with plenty of leisure and enjoyment, and would not hail the prospect of changing from such surroundings to the uncertainties and possible privations of a humble marriage.

Now, when the suitor of forty appears on the scene, I think she would be very well advised in considering him. If he is a man of means, and a widower, he will have a good home ready for her to step into. If she is an attractive girl, he will be very proud to call her his wife. No little service he can do her will be overlooked, and he will hail the idea of having a young companion as second only to enjoying once more the delights of his own youth. In illness and trouble he will be found always sympathetic, and perhaps better able to give the right aid and consolation than a young and probably more selfish man.

On her part, she will have a nice home, with everything prepared for her. It will be a source of pride and pleasure for her to keep it up and manage it well. To suddenly become mistress of a fine establishment, and entertainer of her husband's business friends, will be such a gratifying position for her that, altogether, the absence of the love element in the match will be enormously compensated. And who is to say that in time she may not grow very fond of her middle-aged protector? In the cases I know of, this has been the result. The girl has married for what appeared to be convenience, and in time it has grown to be a love more durable than the passionate emotion of a young couple.

For girls not given to the romantic view of life, unaccustomed to hard work, and not desirous of undertaking it, such a marriage as the above has many solid advantages, and I advise girls who are placed in such a position as this not to dismiss from their minds the idea of marrying solely because their suitor is much older than themselves, and because they have no feeling of love for him. The other solid advantages of such a match are very powerful, and should not be overlooked.

[Next week: "Can a Man Love Two Girls?"]

ENGAGED GIRLS!

It is always interesting to know other people's opinion of yourself, especially when that opinion is absolutely unbiased. If you want to know what sort of a person you are, send a specimen of your handwriting to

RANEE, 22 Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., inclosing six penny stamps and a stamped addressed envelope.

NEURALGIA!

Your "Alkan" is indeed an excellent preparation; since using two bottles of it I have been entirely free from neuralgia. It has given me great pleasure to be able to recommend it to many I know who suffer from the same complaint. I found the letter you sent me containing full directions for using the preparation of great value, as the directions must be followed to obtain relief.

I find your "Alkan" also of great value in the case of severe headache from influenza, etc. It affords instant relief if used according to directions. I am so thankful to say I have been free from neuralgia for a very considerable time, and am feeling much stronger.—Yours faithfully, E. SINCLAIR.

Denmark House, Gosport, Hants.

2/9 post free from THE ALKAN LTD., 150 Strand, London, W.C.—[ADVT.]

Winter Colds

Doctor advised Scott's Emulsion rather than any other form of the oil

HERBERT TURNER
(From a photograph.)

We are living now in the trying days the year when a winter cold is almost rybody's portion. We do not treat ter colds with sufficient care. If we ught of them seriously we would get remedy for them, as this doctor ised.

"67 Cleveland Street, Upperthorpe,
"Sheffield,
"February 15th, 1901,

Dear Sirs,—For some years past I e been very susceptible to colds and nchitis, and this winter my doctor ised me to take cod-liver oil, and gested Scott's Emulsion in preference ny other form of the oil. I took preparation and found great relief n its use in a very short time. My h quickly responded to the treat- t, my chest was greatly strengthened, my general health improved con- ably. I continued the treatment time, and am gratified to say as a t my health is now all that I could for, and I have not had a cold since g Scott's Emulsion. I think this onderful, as I am a traveller, and quently am exposed to all con- s of weather. I consider Scott's sion a very valuable and invigor- remedy, and worth its weight in to anyone suffering from affections chest.—Yours truly,

"(Signed) HERBERT TURNER."

Turner emphasises two points for who fear wintry weather—two ards that point the direct road to of winter colds. First, Mr. Turner *I have not had a cold since taking Emulsion;*" the medicine not only cured his cold but so strengthened his chest and improved his general health as to prevent any return of the trouble. This is what Scott's Emulsion always does—cures the weakness and then keeps the health up to normal standard.

The second point he quotes from his doctor: "*Take cod-liver oil, Scott's Emulsion in preference to any other form of the oil.*" Mr. Turner's doctor is one of hundreds of physicians who have said the same thing. For they know the purity of the oil we use and how scientifically it is blended with the re-inforcing elements of hypophosphites of lime and soda! These last two are bone and tissue builders, the oil purifies the blood and gives it renewed vitality. That is why Scott's Emulsion is everywhere preferred by physicians to "any other form of the oil."

Winter colds yield promptly to Scott's Emulsion. With it in the home no one need fear the worst of winter weather; it reinforces the human system so surely that all colds, coughs, chest and throat ailments quickly disappear. Scott's Emulsion never disappoints. In this is the difference between Scott's Emulsion and imitations and substitutes.

On the wrapper of each bottle of Scott's Emulsion is a picture of a man with a big codfish. See that the picture is there when you buy.

You can obtain a sample of Scott's Emulsion by sending threepence to cover postage to Scott and Bowne Limited, 95 Great Saffron Hill, London, E.C., and mentioning this paper. All chemists sell Scott's Emulsion.

FORTIFIES THE SYSTEM AGAINST

CONSTIPATION,

Sleeplessness, languor, loss of appetite, headaches and dizziness are symptoms of Indigestion and Liver Disorder, and quickly yield to the extract of roots and barks known as

SEIGEL'S SYRUP

Mrs. E. Cowley, 162, Wavertree Road, Liverpool, says: "For years I was a martyr to Indigestion. Nothing I ate would digest properly, and the pains in my chest and stomach after eating the lightest meal made life wretched. Bad headaches and constipation combined to make me miserable. I got no relief until I took Seigel's Syrup, which quickly set me right."
July 5th, 1901.

COUGHS, COLDS AND INFLUENZA.

27
YEARS' SUCCESS
AS
THE UNIVERSAL REMEDY FOR

Coughs, Colds, Asthma, Bronchitis, Influenza, Whooping-Cough, Hoarseness, &c.

HAS MADE

Owbridge's Lung Tonic

AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY TO EVERYBODY.

Important Notice:

SUBSTITUTION.—*There are so many imitations of this successful, and therefore popular, remedy that it is of the utmost importance you should use the word "OWBRIDGE" when buying Lung Tonic, and TAKE NO SUBSTITUTE.*

Prepared by
W. T. OWBRIDGE, M.P.S., Chemist, Hull.
Sold everywhere in bottles, at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., & 11s.

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Three Columns Engaged.

A pencil-case will be awarded to each person whose letter is dealt with on this page, or whose suggestion for a title is used.

IF any of you should happen to be passing a newsagent's shop or a bookstall to-day or to-morrow, just keep your eyes open for a very startling cover. A reproduction of it you will find on the front page of *Pearson's Weekly*. The young lady, a photograph of whose face appears on the cover, has really a charming face—until she contorts it. On the cover of next week's SHORT STORIES you will find a small portrait of the girl's face in repose, as well as another contortion. One of her facial contortions will appear on the covers of the next six numbers of SHORT STORIES, and the complete set will be quite worth while keeping by you to show your friends.

G. S. G. M. suggests the following cure for hiccoughs: Place one of your hands on the patient's chest, and the other on his back, and squeeze him for a few moments, when you will find the hiccoughs will have left him.——Readers may like to experiment on this. Unfortunately, hiccoughs have a nasty habit of attacking people when there is either nobody near to apply this beneficent remedy, or when there are so many people near that the experiment might be embarrassing to a self-conscious sufferer. I find the best remedy is to remain for a few minutes in a state of perfect quiet, without breathing or exercising any of the senses. I do not mean an active stifling of the breath, but simply a cessation of it.

N. R. tells me that her father has recently been vaccinated, and, being unable to obtain a piece of red tape, simply cut a strip off the cover of *Pearson's Weekly*, and pinned it round his arm. My correspondent suggests that other readers might care to do the same.——I think this is a brilliant idea, and I am sure that it will be found quite useful. But don't make the strip too thin or it might break. I would suggest that you simply cut off the title of the paper, and fasten that round the arm. No one could help seeing that, and, of course, it would answer its purpose—as well as your purpose and our purpose.

"WHY does iron contract under the influence of cold, and expand with heat?" asks CURIOUS. "Further, why does it rust?"——It is a chemical law that all bodies contract, or grow more dense under the influence of cold, and expand under heat. The molecules of iron obey the same law. Under heat, they are affected to such an extent that in time they pass from the lower form of mineral life into the liquid state, which is explained by the fact that heat brings to them a species of vitality. The reason that iron rusts, is that under the influence of damp, which alone can cause it to rust, the iron molecules absorb a particle of oxygen, while they throw off one of hydrogen, becoming, in time, dry or oxidised.

"WHEN should we grammatically drop our 'h's'?" inquires DUNCE. "How is it that we talk of 'an hotel,' or even 'an hippopotamus,' assuming a mute 'h'? Further, regarding the use of 'a' and 'an,' why do we say 'a union' seeing that 'u' is a vowel?"——We say "an" hotel because the word "hotel" comes to us direct from the French, and the French drop all their "h's" after the definite articles "a," "an," "the." With regard to "hippopotamus," there is no such justification for dropping the "h," as the word comes to us from a Greek word, the English rendering of which is "hippopotamus," in which the "h" is rightly to be sounded, as in the case of scores of other adopted Greek words. "Hospital," too, coming from the Latin "*hospitalis*," is entitled to its "h," and that we say "an hospital" is simply another instance of our laxity with regard to the aspirate. It should, of course, be "an union," strictly speaking, but the letter "u" when starting a word is more of a consonant than a vowel, so usage has led us to adopt the "a" before it. With regard to the "h" question, my correspondent may take it that he is only justified in dropping it when the word is French.

DEAL WINS!

ALL the competitors who sent in their attempts in the Railway Stations Competition from Deal have each received a sovereign, because they formed the greatest number who forwarded attempts from any one town in proportion to the population. None of these competitors were correct, but, according to the conditions of the competition, this does not make any difference to their claim to the prize. The population of Deal is 10,500, and the number of competitors was fourteen. A sovereign has, accordingly, been forwarded to each of the following:

Miss D. Smith, St. Pierre Boarding House
Miss L. Hodge, 82 Blenheim Road
M. A. Lass, Beaconsfield Road
A. Street, Wistaria House
W. Hastings, 1 Dufferin Terrace, Church Path
F. Francis, St. Pierre Boarding House
C. U. M. Furley, 12 Prince of Wales Terrace
C. M. Norris, 1 Dufferin Terrace
W. G. Coan, 82 Blenheim Road
J. Simons, jun., 18 Park Street
F. Cavell, St. Pierre Boarding House
Miss E. Furley, 12 Prince of Wales Terrace
Miss Annie Cavell, Victoria Parade
Miss M. Hastings, 1 Dufferin Terrace

} All of Deal, Kent.

IT has always been the object of competitions in *Pearson's Weekly* to improve the knowledge of readers as well as to interest them. Those competitions in which one is simply asked to fill up so many figures, or to dispose of copies of the paper in the most curious fashion, always strike me as being unsuitable for intelligent competitors. With the Name Hunting Competition now running, a certain amount of research is advisable, with the result that the range of knowledge of those who compete is considerably widened. This fact is brought home to me by thousands of letters which I am constantly receiving from both successful and unsuccessful competitors. Here are extracts from two which speak for themselves; one is from a reader at Llandudno, and the other from a reader at Canterbury:

> "I don't think anyone can realise what your competitions, as they are now run, are doing towards educating the people. I can safely say I have never studied my dictionary so much before, and I have therefore been enlightened a great deal. I know others who are competing, and their dictionaries and encyclopædias are their constant companions."

> "I have been a subscriber to *P.W.* from the very first number, and have entered for most of the prize competitions from that time until now, and, although I have never succeeded in capturing a big money prize, I keep on trying. But apart from the question of prizes, I find the competitions intensely interesting in themselves, and many a score of hours I have spent in solving some of the puzzling pictures or phrases, thoroughly enjoying the task, and feeling inordinately triumphant when successful in cracking a particularly hard nut. Not only have I derived amusement from *P.W.* and its competitions, though, but I have learnt much that is useful and edifying. For instance, until I went in for the Railway Competition I had no idea that 'lobe of ear' could be called anything but 'lobe of ear.' I had never heard of 'burr,' and that is only one example out of hundreds."

THE prize of a solid silver pencil-case, offered in the TIME COMPETITION, has been won by Mr. D. Anderson, 11 Naylor Street, Hulme, Manchester. Consolation prizes have been sent to Mr. Jas. H. Gornall, Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, Clitheroe; Mr. Jas. Moore, 59 Agincourt Avenue, Belfast; Mr. G. Burton, 40 Canterbury Grove, West Norwood, S.E.; Mr. D. O'Neill, 7 Stow Hill, Newport, Mon.; Mr. A. Hindley, 60 Everton Road, Liverpool; Mr. E. Barker, 129 Queen's Parade, Scarborough; Mr. D. Adamson, 32 Helen Street, Govan; Miss J. Osborn, 15 Seaside Road, St. Leonards. Some of the best attempts will be published next week.

THAT interesting individual who seems to have nothing else to do, but to tell me how to edit this paper, appears again this week under the name of DISGUSTED. He is annoyed because, in a recent issue, I inserted a piece of information, sent by a reader, concerning the number of Joneses in a northern parish. He wants to know of what earthly general interest this is?——I am always pleased to receive miscellaneous information from readers, which, of course, varies in interest according to the taste of individuals. The thrilling piece of information sent by my present correspondent, which amounts to the fact that he is DISGUSTED, will doubtless compensate millions of readers who may have resented the insertion of those Jones figures, so I give it forthwith: DISGUSTED, dear reader, is disgusted.

IRRITATED writes: "I suffer a lot of daily trouble from correspondents who write on sheets of notepaper without any regard for the continuity of the pages. It is often a Chinese puzzle in a letter of several sheets to make out how a letter runs. Why is such an ordinary rule of commonsense as writing on the pages consecutively so continually disregarded?"——Because of the weakness of human nature. There is a certain amount of trouble involved in blotting and turning to page two of a sheet of notepaper, and man staves off trouble till the last possible moment. Therefore, when page one is finished, he turns the sheet bodily over, covers page four, and then, impelled by sheer necessity has to go back to page two. This man will continue to do until the four-page notepaper sheet is abolished. Another reason is that one often does not know how long a letter one is going to write, and, in the event of the thing only running to two pages, it looks more respectable and less obvious if two visible pages are completed instead of one and a hidden page. I may not be an absolute genius myself, but I will say I always have the sense to number my pages from one to four or more.

"WHY," asks CYMRO, "do we laugh loudly on hearing a story told us by a friend or at a concert or theatre, while if we read the same jokes in *P.W.* we should scarcely do more than smile? Or when we read in connection with a statesman's speech the words, 'roars of laughter,' do we not even grin ourselves?"——Because, CYMRO, laughter in most of us is more often artificial and complimentary than spasmodic. But, at the same time, there is all the difference in the world between reading a joke and hearing it well told. While, in reading it, we are simply applying our mental faculties to the detection of humour, without the aid of a *raconteur*, when we hear a joke well told, it gratifies our senses, pleases our ear and mind alike, and stimulates the animal instinct to laugh in a way that a mere mental appreciation from reading the same joke fails to do. In the same way, what a difference there is in reading Shakespeare's plays and seeing them acted. It is simply because, in the former case, only our mind is at work, while in the latter, the senses are in full play, and emotion results from impulses of the senses and not of the mind.

OWING to the time occupied in checking the M.P.'s Competition, we are unable to publish the result this week; the names and addresses of winners, and key of the competition will appear next week.

H. L. F. has been trying for some time past to understand how Mr. P. Doubleyou obtained his name, and what that name means?——Dear! dear! It never occurred to me for a moment that anybody could fail to see that the name is simply Mr. *P.W.* written in full. And to think that the point of this cleverly-constructed name should have been missed by you all this time!

CURIOUS has been reminded by the recent Canadian tour of the Prince and Princess of Wales of Mr. George Griffith's description of the ascent of the Kicking Horse Pass, in which a train was made to ascend by three powerful engines, one in front, one in the middle, and another propelling it from the rear. The gradient was so steep that the train sometimes came to a standstill, and even slipped backwards. My correspondent wishes to know if the gradient were so steep, how it was possible to save the train from "running away," seeing that the momentum must have been so great as to render it beyond the control of officials.——In the case referred to by Mr. Griffith, the danger of slipping was avoided by men throwing sand on to the rails behind. The possibility of "running away," however, was avoided by a series of points at different intervals on the track, by which the train could be sent on to a side-track curving in an upward direction from the main line. The signalmen are on the look-out for the contingency of the train running away, and on observing that it was making an uncontrollable descent, would turn the points so as to send it on to this siding. Here it would expend itself, and by running upwards again, round the curve, would acquire a fresh momentum sending it backwards, in which way, by another working of the points, it would get back on to the main track, to make a fresh ascent.

THE following amounts have come to hand in aid of the Fresh Air Fund.

J. Marshall, 4d.; "Tiga," 5s.; Veronica, 5s.; M. W. Daws, 6d.; Harold Govas, 2s. 6d.; W. Daws, 10s.; F. S. Service, 4s. 11d.; S. G., 1s. 6d.; Anon., 9d.; Well Wisher, 1s. 6d.; Anon. (S. Africa), 2s. 6d.; Yesterday's Winnings, 1s. 6d.; Mrs. G. White, 5s.; Anon., 5s. 7d.; "Duty, not Honesty," 5s.; A Friend and Well Wisher, 1s. 6.; H. Charlton (S. A. C.), £1; W. Cotterill, 3s.; "Fricant," 5s.; Anon., 5d.; P. and T., 2s.; A Friend, 1s. 4d.; Thank Offering, 9d.; E. Stead, 10d.; W. W., 1s.; M. B., 3s.; R. W. Milton, £1; M. Brice Miller, 1s.; Spaniard, 3s. 6d.; S. M. Keller, 1s. 1d.; May Phelan, 6d.; Anon., 5s.; M. Abraham, 1s.; Alice Franklin, 1s.; Pompey, 5d.; W. R. Mackenzie, 1s.; Veronica, 5s.; Winning, 6s.

COLLECTED:

Capt. C. M. Braine, s.s. *Khalifah*, £1 5s.; R. T. Vity, 11s. 3d.; Cable s.s. *Britannia*, per J. Leach, £15 3s. 6d.; P. S. *Captain Cook*, per W. Le Maître, 9s. 6d.; W. J. Harris, 4s.; T. Denny, s.s *Ethiopia*, £1 8s. 6d.; E. G. Price, 10s. 6d.; Frank Joslin, 12s.; Post and Telegraph (Cardiff), per B. E. Good, £3 10s.; Trooper J. D. Christie, £1 2s.; Winnie Greenwood, £1 0s. 2d.; E. A. S., 10s.; First Football Competition, 1s. 6d.; W. Hall, 10s.; C. M. Heller, £1 1s.; H. M., 5s.; Sale of Stamps, 4d.; Entertainment given by Officers and Passengers s.s. *Elstree Grange*, per Mrs. S. Cooke, £3 4s.; Proceeds of Amateur Dramatic Entertainment, per Wallace Breem, £2 5s.; Miss E. Child, 6s.

SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW.

476 Claims already Paid, including one of a Thousand Pounds.

This Insurance holds good for **any number of claims** to the extent of **£1,000**—not for one only. **£1,000** specially guaranteed by the OCEAN ACCIDENT AND GUARANTEE CORPORATION LIMITED, 40, 42, and 44 Moorgate Street, London, E.C., to whom notice of claims, under the following conditions, must be sent within seven days to the above address. Insurance ticket, applicable to passenger trains in Great Britain and Ireland, issued under section 33 of the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Company, Limited, Act, 1890,

£1,000 will be paid by the above Corporation to the legal representative of any person killed by an accident to the train in which the deceased was an ordinary ticket-bearing passenger (including holders of season and excursion tickets, and post-office officials in any of the railway sorting vans, and railway servants travelling with pass or railway servants' ticket in an ordinary carriage), and who, at the time of such accident, had in his, or her, possession, the Insurance Coupon on this page, or the paper in which it is, with his, or her, usual signature, written in ink or pencil, on the space provided at the foot. This paper may be left at his, or her, place of abode, so long as the coupon is signed.

PROVIDED ALSO, that the said sum will be paid to the legal representatives of such person injured, should death result from such accident within three calendar months thereafter, and that notice of the accident be given within three days of its occurrence.

One Hundred Pounds will be paid to whomsoever the Editor of *Pearson's Weekly* may decide to be the Next-of-kin of any cyclist who meets his death by an accident while actually riding a cycle, provided that deceased at the time of such accident had in his, or her, possession the Insurance Coupon on this page, or the paper in which it is, with his, or her, usual signature, written in ink or pencil on the space provided at the foot, and that death occurred within twenty-four hours thereafter, and that notice was given of such accident to the said Corporation at above address within three days of its occurrence. This paper may be left at his, or her, place of abode, so long as the coupon is signed.

Subscribers who have duly paid a twelve-months' subscription for PEARSON'S WEEKLY in advance to their newsagent, or to the Publisher, need not, during the period covered by their subscription, sign the coupon, or carry the paper on their person. It is only necessary to forward the newsagent's receipt to the publisher of the paper, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and a certificate will be sent in exchange.

The above conditions are the essence of the contract.

This insurance holds good for the current week of issue only, and entitles the holder to the benefit of, and is subject to, the conditions of the "Ocean Accident and Guarantee Company, Limited, Act," 1890, Risks No. 2 and 3.

The Purchase of this Publication is admitted to be the payment of a Premium under Sect. 34 of the Act. A Print of the Act can be seen at the office of this Journal, or of the said Corporation. No person can recover on more than one Coupon Ticket of this paper in respect of the same risk.

Signature .....

Available from 8 p.m., Thursday, February 20th, 1902, until midnight Friday, February 28th, 1902.

Printed by HORACE COX, Bream's Buildings, E.C., and Published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., at Pearson's Weekly Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

"THAT'S FROM *P.W.*!"

A LIVER MEDICINE WITHOUT RIVAL.

PROOF THAT THEY CURE BILIOUSNESS.

Mrs. M. Cousins, of 46 Leyshon Street, Pontypridd, who is the wife of an ex-President of the Pontypridd Trades Council, recently told the following facts to a "Pontypridd Observer" reporter:—

"I used to suffer from liver complaint and biliousness, and was very ill for nearly three months. I had severe pains in the back and between the shoulders, and became so debilitated that I could not even lift a kettle or a saucepan off the fire. Sometimes at night I could obtain no rest because of the pain, and my back ached so much that I was unable to turn over in bed. My head was also very bad, and though I tried several advertised remedies in the hope of obtaining a cure for my complaints, these did me no good.

"One day I saw an account in the paper about Bile Beans, and decided to give them a fair trial. I obtained a box, and they did me so much good that when I had finished them I sent for more. In a short time the pains gradually ceased, and I commenced to sleep better at night, feeling refreshed when I awoke in the morning. My health is now restored, and I am better than I have been for a very long time. I can confidently say that this is due to Bile Beans. If any of my children are suffering from headache Bile Beans never fail to relieve them, and several of my friends have tried them on my recommendation."

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

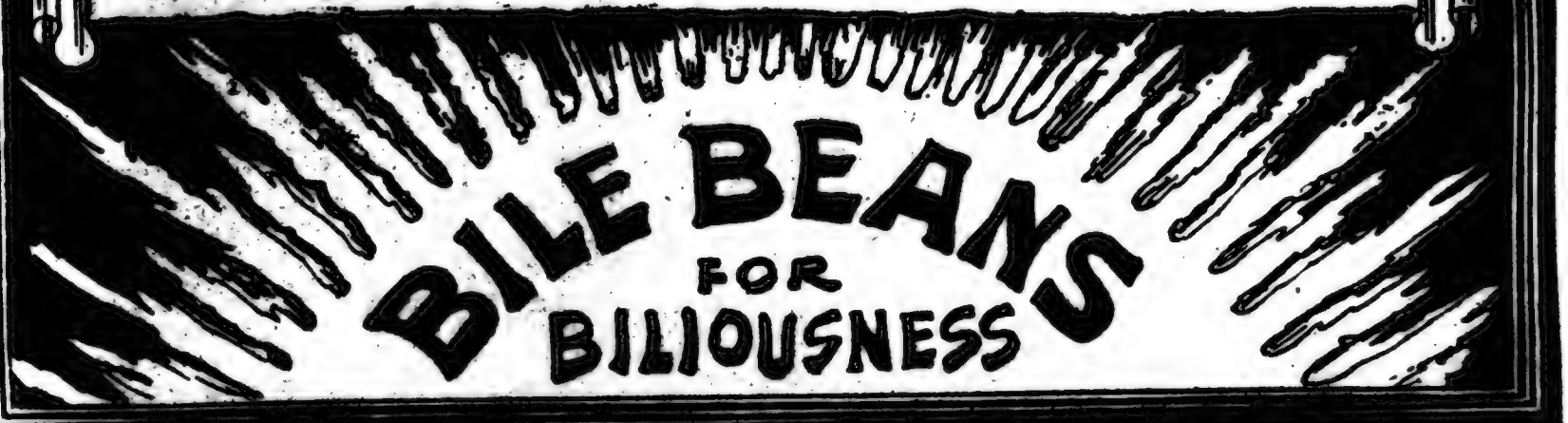
are purely vegetable in composition, and their excellence has been so well proved that many eminent doctors are now prescribing them largely. They are a certain cure for all liver and kidney ailments, pains in the back, chest, or side, biliousness, headache, neuralgia, liver chill, colds, fainting fits, attacks of dizziness, indigestion, flatulence, defective secretion of the bile, wasting affections, female irregularities, rheumatism, and the host of ailments having a common origin in impurity of the blood, a general congestion of the system, and loss of vital force.

Obtainable from all chemists, or post free (if this paper is mentioned) from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119 and 120 London Wall, London, E.C., upon receipt of prices, 1/1½ or 2/9 per box (2/9 box contains three times 1/1½ size). Bile Beans are sold only in sealed boxes; never loose.

FREE SAMPLE BOX.

The proprietors have so much faith in the efficacy of Bile Beans that they will forward a sample box free, and a book on liver and digestive ailments, if you send your name and address and a penny stamp (to cover return postage), along with accompanying coupon, to the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co.'s Central Distributing Depot, Greek Street, Leeds.

FREE SAMPLE COUPON.
"PEARSON'S WEEKLY."
Feb. 27, 1902.



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KEYLESS or KEY-WIND

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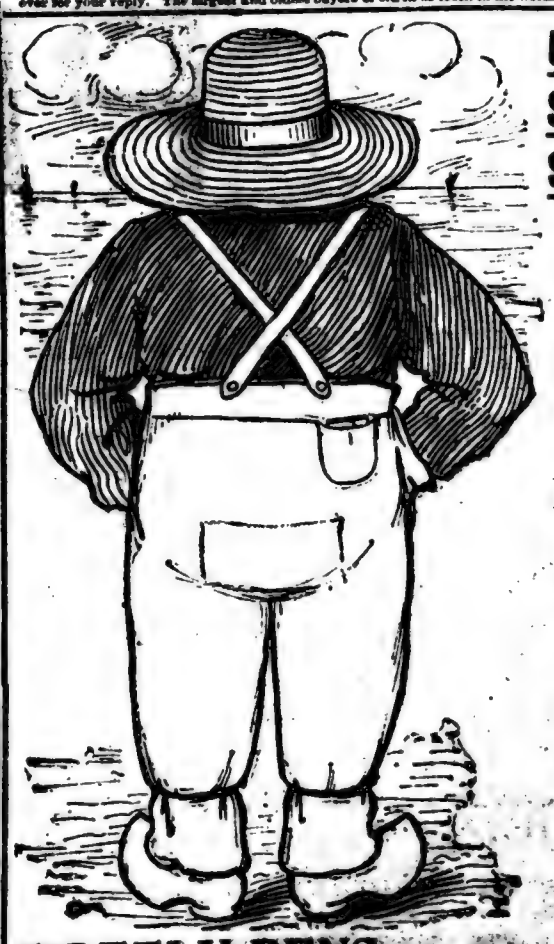

has not been a success, but he stands on the yellow sands, hoping that sometime from somewhere fortune will somehow come to him. He sights a ship in the distance, and is inspired by hope for a time, only to discover as it nears the shore that it has tacked in another direction.

Many people, like Uncle Stephen, regardless of the laws of cause and effect, wonder why success never comes to them. Good seamanship is wanted to guide the ship safely into port, and good penmanship to guide one's fortunes to success.

In Uncle's pocket will be found three Firefly Pens, the use of which will give character to one's writing. There is no character in a stylographic or typewritten letter, and without character or esprit in hand and business, one will be like Uncle Stephen looking out in vain for his ship to come in.

FIREFLY PENS are made of a new incorrodible metal as flexible as gold. An Uncle Stephen Card, as above, with three FIREFLY PENS in his pocket, may be had from all Stationers for One Penny. Box of Pens, price 6d.

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Piano Brain

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Piano Keyboard

EVERY QUESTION HAS TWO SIDES

and if it is an important question, it is worth considering from both points of view. This is more especially true of matters relating to health, for that is of vital importance to all. This being so, just for a brief space

CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF GOOD HEALTH.

ONE SIDE.

Few people can claim to possess the blessing of good health without fluctuation for any very long period. Everybody suffers at some time or another from complaints due to the disordered condition of one or more of those wonderful organs, in the harmonious working of which health alone can be found.

However robust and strong the constitution may appear to be, there are times when Nature requires "a helping hand" to assist her in relieving congested parts, and restoring to normal function. In this work Nature has no more efficient aid than BEECHAM'S PILLS. When the digestive organs refuse to assimilate the food; when the liver acts sluggishly; when the kidneys do not properly perform their allotted duties, then is the time when

BEECHAM'S PILLS

ought to be taken, and they will certainly and speedily set right the temporary evil, and restore to sound and vigorous health.

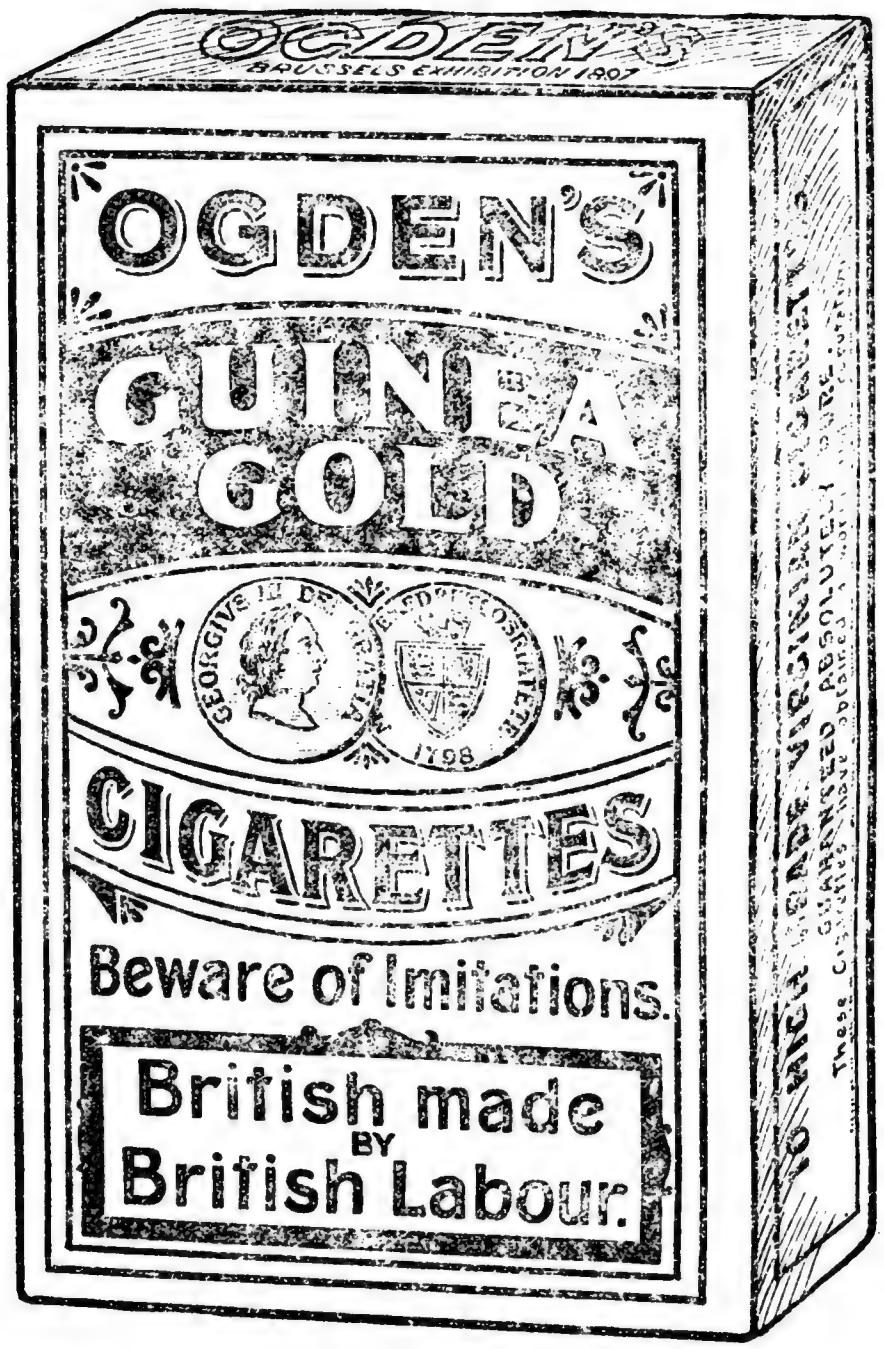
THE OTHER SIDE.

On the other hand if the first warning symptoms of "something wrong" are neglected, the person affected is running a grave risk of irretrievably ruined health; for ailments, apparently trifling, which remain unchecked, will not cure themselves, but, on the contrary, may induce diseases certain to end in serious illness, or even put life itself in jeopardy,

Therefore consider well this important matter. Take the health question in hand while there is still a balance in your favour, and on the first signs of failing strength or discomfort avail yourself of BEECHAM'S PILLS, for this splendid specific will gently but surely restore the stomach to its full vigour, give renewed energy to the Nervous System, cleanse the Bowels and Liver, and although the cost of Beecham's Pills is so trifling, this medicine, on account of its efficacy and general utility, has achieved the proud reputation of being

WORTH a GUINEA a BOX

FAC-SIMILE — the Genuine Article.



These High Grade Cigarettes give Employment to Thousands of BRITISH People.

FAC-SIMILE — the Genuine Article.

These High Grade Cigarettes give Employment to Thousands of BRITISH People.

... Our New Ally. ...

Some Facts about Japan and its People.

Dentistry with the Fingers.

The Japanese dentist does not frighten his patient with an array of steel instruments. All his operations in tooth-drawing are performed by the thumb and forefinger of one hand. The skill necessary to do this is acquired only after long practice, but, when once it is obtained, the operator is able to extract half-a-dozen teeth in about thirty seconds without once removing his fingers from the patient's mouth. The dentist's education commences with the pulling out of pegs which have been pressed into soft wood; it ends with the drawing of hard pegs which have been driven into an oak plank with a heavy mallet.

Where Papa Names the Baby.

The children of the Ainos, a people living in Northern Japan, do not receive their names until they are five years old. It is the father who then chooses the name by which the child is afterwards called.

Street-Corner Novelists.

Public story-tellers still earn a good livelihood in Japan. In Tokio alone 600 of them ply their trade, provided with a small table, a fan, and a paper rapper to illustrate and emphasise the points of their tales.

No Lost Children.

In Japan, small children of the poor, who have the gift of straying and no nurses to look after them, are safeguarded by the simple precaution of hanging labels round their necks which tell their names and addresses.

All Schools Teach English.

In the public schools in Japan the English language is required to be taught by law. The Japanese youth in the open ports and commercial cities are all eager to learn English as a passport to wealth, position, and employment.

Soldiers as Gymnasts.

Every Japanese barrack has a gymnasium, and the Japanese soldiers rank among the best gymnasts in the world. In half a minute they can scale a fourteen-foot wall by simply bounding on each other's shoulders, one man supporting two or three others.

Archery Still Survives.

In Japan archers test their arrows by balancing them on the nails of the second and third fingers of the left hand and rapidly twirling them by the feathered end with the fingers of the right hand. If the arrow makes a whirling sound it is crooked and must be straightened.

Free Doctoring for the Poor.

Out in Japan the doctor never thinks of asking poor patients for a fee. A proverb among the medical fraternity of Japan runs: "When the twin enemies, poverty and disease, invade a home, he who takes aught from that house, even though it be given to him, is a robber."

Volcano Dwellers.

There is no more interesting or curious sight on this earth than the interior of the extinct crater, Aso San, about thirty miles from the city of Kumamoto, in Japan. It is inhabited by 20,000 people, who live and prosper within its vertical wall 800 feet high. The inhabitants rarely make a journey into the outer world, but form, as it were, a little nation by themselves.

The Home of the Kindergarten.

The Japanese have the most perfect kindergarten system in the world. In fact, they originated this method of instructing by entertainment instead of by punishment inflicted. Their play apparatus for such purpose is elaborate, but all of it is adapted to the infant mind, which it is designed at once to amuse and to inform. The little ones of Japan even become somewhat interested in mathematics by seeing and feeling what a pretty thing a cone, a sphere, or a cylinder is when cut out of wood with a lathe. They make outlines of solid figures out of straw, with green peas to hold the joints together, and for the instruction of the blind, flat blocks are provided, with the Japanese characters raised upon them.

The Jap as a Cyclist.

That the Japanese have taken to bicycle-making is a fact which has been well-known for some time. It will probably, however, surprise most people to learn that there are two important factories in the little town of Tokio and another at Yokohama, to say nothing of a fourth at Kioto. These are the chief manufactories of the kind in the islands, and they turn out admirable machines. This can be readily understood by everyone who pauses for even a fraction of a moment to recollect that the Japanese are, as a people, gifted with remarkable imitative skill. Cyclists of England will be interested to learn that the Japanese show a decided preference for the solid tyre. The reason for this is that the roads in Japan are scarcely as well kept as our own, and the liability of the pneumatic to puncture is so much increased.

There is no Mikado.

Mr. W. S. Gilbert was no doubt primarily responsible for the belief which is everywhere prevalent that the Emperor of Japan is always called the Mikado by his people. Ask nine men out of ten what is the official title of the ruler of the islands of the chrysanthemum, and they will probably think they are being made fun of. Assure them that the question is asked in all sober seriousness, and they will give that of the title of Mr. Gilbert's imperial opera. For all this, the nine men out of ten would be wrong. His Majesty is known as "Tenno Hei-Ka," which means "His Imperial Majesty." Thus the people of Japan address their sovereign exactly as do the subjects of the imperious Kaiser. Mikado used at one time to be the title, for it is the oldest form of address in use. It has, however, fallen into abeyance for several generations.

In Japan you buy a dress by the weight.

The Emperor of Japan has just taken to motoring.

In Japan every child is taught to write with both hands.

Japanese brides, during the marriage ceremony, wash the feet of the bridegroom.

At a Japanese banquet it is considered a compliment to exchange cups with a friend.

Fish are sold alive in Japan, the pedlars conveying them through the streets in tanks.

Chrysanthemums, served as salad, are a favourite article of diet among the Japanese.

The Ainu women in North Japan tattoo their faces to give them the appearance of men with whiskers.

The city of Tokio has 800 public baths, where some 300,000 persons bathe daily at a cost of about one halfpenny each.

Every workman in Japan wears on his cap and on his back an inscription giving his business and his employer's name.

Japanese cooks are the most cruel in the world. They cut every atom of flesh off a living fish piecemeal, without first causing death.

It is considered that Japanese men are amongst the best needleworkers in the world, their only equals being the women of Russia.

The Empress of Japan is an adept performer on the koto, a kind of large zither. It is an instrument which is much played and very popular in Japan.

There are no undertakers in Japan. When a person dies his nearest relatives put him into a coffin and bury him. The mourning does not begin until after burial.

In almost every school in Japan it is the custom one day in the autumn, to take the pupils out rabbit hunting, on another mushroom hunting at night with paper lanterns.

Census-taking in Japan is simple, original, but untrustworthy. The houses are counted, and for each of these dwelling-places an average of five persons is allowed.

The lower classes of the Japanese employ hardly any other material than paper for their clothing. Where wages are exceedingly low, cloth is an impossible extravagance.

Many Japanese women are undergoing the slight surgical operation necessary to straighten the slant of the eyelid, which distinguishes them so unmistakably from Caucasian women.

The bridal veil of a Japanese young lady is subsequently used as her shroud. Directly after the marriage it is carefully put away, and reserved until death makes its use again necessary.

The Empress of Japan receives £4,000 worth of clothes from Paris each year. She only consents to appear in public clothed in the garments of her native country once in twelve months.

A spectator in a Japanese theatre, on payment of a small extra fee, is permitted to stand up; and the person behind him cannot object, although the latter's view of the performance is obstructed.

An evidence of the striking uniformity of size among the Japanese is found in the fact that recent measurements taken of an infantry regiment show no variation exceeding two inches in height or twenty pounds in weight.

Most of the Japanese houses are of one general shape and two storeys high. They are put together by a curious method of mortising, at which these people are adepts, not one nail being used throughout the construction of the whole building.

The Empress of Japan takes a great interest in all that concerns the nation, from the rice crops upwards. Her Majesty is said to have a special talent for literature, and writes beautiful poetry. A poem of hers, set to music, is sung in the schools all over the land.

The Japanese never sleep with the head to the north. This is because the dead, in Japan, are always buried with the head in that position. In the sleeping rooms of many of the private houses and of hotels, a diagram of the points of the compass is posted upon the ceiling for the convenience of guests.

When Railway Travelling.

A writer describing scenes on Japanese railways, says when a native lady enters the carriage she slips her feet from her tiny shoes, stands upon the seat, and then sits demurely with her feet doubled beneath her. A moment later she lights a cigarette, or her little pipe, which holds just tobacco enough to produce two good whiffs of smoke. All Japanese people sit with their feet upon the seat of the car, and not as Europeans do. When the ticket-collector—attired in a blue uniform—enters the carriage, he removes his cap and twice bows politely. He repeats the bows as he comes to each passenger to collect the tickets from them.

A Pretty Idea.

Every hotel has a fan, special to itself, containing a view of the hotel and a blessing from the writings of Confucius. One of these is always given to the departing guest.

Great Fish Eaters.

The Japanese eat more fish than any other people in the World. With them meat-eating is a foreign innovation, confined to the rich, or rather to those rich people who prefer it to the national diet.

How They Conduct Auctions.

A Japanese auction is a most solemn affair. The public do not call out their bids, but write their names, together with the amount they are willing to pay, on a slip of paper, and put it in a box. These are looked through and the article awarded to the person who has made the biggest offer.

They Tip in Advance.

In Japan it is always the rule of politeness to pay a trifle more than the sum mentioned on your hotel bill. To settle the account nett would be considered an insult, or at least a mark of great dissatisfaction. People who have travelled in Japan say that the Japanese always tip the waiter on entering an hotel.

A Lifelong Job.

A piece of genuine Japanese lacquer costs the native artist almost a lifetime to perfect, and is produced by hundreds of thin coats of lacquer laid on at considerable intervals of time, the value consisting rather in the labour bestowed than in the quality of the material used. First-class lacquer work can scarcely be scratched by a needle.

Octopus for Dinner.

The octopus are pretty plentiful in Japanese waters, and have been known to attack fishermen in their boats. When this hideous monster assumes the aggressive, the only chance the fishermen have is to lop off the tentacles of the beast. Failing this the boat may be upset and the men dragged under. The octopus is highly valued in Japan as an article of food.

No Milk, Thanks!

A London medical man is collecting statistics in regard to consumption in Japan. He wants to see whether there is an appreciable diminution of that disease as compared with milk-drinking lands. In Japan they have no milk to speak of. The natives do not care for it. Moreover, milk is an animal product, and, as such, is prohibited by the native religion.

Ancestor Worship.

A singular illustration of the persistence with which the Japanese adhere to their family vocations is seen in an announcement in a Japanese newspaper, that a certain celebrated dancing-master was to hold a service in honour of the one-thousandth anniversary of the death of his ancestor who was the first of the family to take up the profession.

Babies Named After Flowers.

It is not uncommon for a Jap girl to bear the name of a flower. On the other hand, however, many girls in Japan bear the names of some domestic utensil, as frying-pan or dust-brush. Doubtless this results from the custom common among some people of naming a child from the first object that strikes the eye after the little one has come into the world.

"His Japanese Wife."

At one time, if a Japanese girl married a foreigner, she was instantly decapitated. A Portuguese gentleman was probably the first European to marry a daughter of the land of the chrysanthemum with impunity. He went there thirty years ago, and fell in love with a Japanese girl. Her parents warned her of the fatal consequences of marrying him, but she persisted, with the result that the Mikado decided that she must be beheaded. However, after a correspondence of over five years' duration between the Portuguese and Japanese Governments, she was permitted to live.

Why Japanese Women Look Pleasant.

Perhaps the secret of the sweet expression and habitual serenity of the Japanese women can be found in their freedom from small worries. The fashion of dress never varying saves the wear of mind on that subject, and the bareness of the houses and simplicity of diet makes housekeeping a mere bagatelle. Everything is exquisitely clean, and easily kept so. There is no paint, no drapery, no crowd of little ornaments, no coming into the houses with the footwear worn in a dusty streets. And then the feeling of living in rooms that can be turned into balconies and verandas at a moment's notice, of having walls that slide away as freely as do the scenes on the stage, and let in all out-of-doors or change the suites of rooms to the shape and size that the whim of the day or the hour requires. The Japanese are learning much from us, some things not to their improvement. We might begin, with profit to ourselves, to learn of them.

Watch the girl on SHORT STORIES cover, her face changes each week.

Omega Oil

STOPS PAIN.

CURES

RHEUMATISM, SCIATICA, LUMBAGO, SPRAINS, BRUISES, SWELLINGS, TENDER FEET, WEAK BACKS, CHILBLAINS, SORE THROAT, NEURALGIA, COLD IN THE CHEST, STIFF JOINTS, TIRED SHOULDERS, ACHING MUSCLES, &c., &c.

AN ACCIDENT.

Mr. T. Aldridge, Broker, 187 Rochdale Road, Manchester, writes:—"I had the misfortune to have a shutter fall on my foot which immediately became very blue, and gave me intense pain. I got a bottle of Omega Oil from Boots' Stores, in Market Street, and after four applications the pain was nearly gone, the effect was most marvellous. I could not have believed it had I not tried it myself. I have recommended Omega Oil to several people, and its effect in relieving pain is simply wonderful."

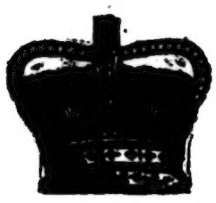
PRICE 1/1½; LARGE BOTTLE, 2/9.

All Chemists sell Omega Oil, or they can get it for you. Never accept a substitute. Sent post paid on receipt of price in money order or stamps.

OMEGA LTD., 14 and 16 Euston Bldgs., LONDON, N.W.

PHOSFERINE

The Greatest of all Tonics.



DEBILITY.
NOW A DIFFERENT PERSON.
THE DOCTOR'S MEDICINE DID NO GOOD.

"As I am taking your Phosferine will you please send me one of your drop conductors for which I enclose stamps. I might just add I have been under the doctor several weeks suffering from debility, but I feel quite a different person since taking a few doses of your Phosferine. The doctor's medicine did not do me any good at all. I shall continue taking Phosferine till perfectly well."—(Signed) B. BECKWITH, 184 Latimer Road, Notting Hill, W January 3rd, 1902.

Phosferine is an unfailing remedy for Neuralgia, Nervous Dyspepsia, Anæmia, Brain-fag, Depression, Impoverished Blood, Rheumatism, Sleeplessness, Indigestion, Influenza, Nervous Headaches, Debility, and all disorders consequent upon a reduced state of the Nervous System.

Phosferine has been supplied by

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H.I.M. the Empress of Russia.
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H.I.M. the Dowager Empress of Russia.
H.R.H. the Crown Princess of Roumania.
and many other Royal personages.

Proprietors, ASHTON and PARSONS (Limited), 17 Farringdon Road, London, E.C.

Bottles, 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 6d. Post free, 1s. 3d., 2s., and 4s. 9d. Sold by all Chemists, Stores, &c. The 2s. 9d. size contains nearly four times the 1s. 1½d. size.

PING-PONG TABLE TENNIS

ONE DOZEN

Globe Polish Celluloid Seamless

BALLS FOR PING-PONG

OR TABLE TENNIS,

Post 6d. Free.

These Balls are guaranteed regulation size, and are equal in every respect to the best Celluloid Balls now on the market. They are offered for sale by the proprietors of the world-renowned "Globe" Polishes, and are obtainable only from

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Send to-day as the quantity is limited.

Allen Foster & Co.

THE LONDON MANUFACTURERS

ILLUSTRATED SKETCH BOOK OF FASHIONS FOR SPRING SEASON, NOW READY. Patterns of Materials sent Post Free.

10/6 **10/6**

ALLEN FOSTER & CO.'S SHOW ROOMS, 47 Golden Lane, Barbican, London, E.C., Are open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturdays until 1 o'clock. Ladies are invited to call and inspect their goods.

DESIGN No. 600 **12/6** Carriage 6d. extra. Skirt alone, **6/6** Carriage 3d. extra

Every Lady should see THE NEW 'CORONATE' CLOTH. All the new Pastel shades *Write for Patterns.*

LADIES' COSTUMES AND JACKETS IN GREAT VARIETY. *Direct at first cost from the "Alfesco" Factories.*

DESIGN No. 673. **30/-** Made in all the Pastel Shades.

Design No. 722. 10/6. New Chesterfield Coat for the Spring Season, 30 inches long. Made in stylish Tweed, Covert Coating, or Vicuna Cloths. Colours: Fawn, Brown, Grey, Green Fawn, and Black. All sizes kept in stock. Price only 10/6. Carriage paid 6d. extra.

VALUE FOR MONEY.

DESIGN No. 932. 10/6.

Design No. 600. 12/6. The New Chesterfield Coat and Skirt Costume; the coat has the fashionable "Alfesco" collar, trimmed tailor-stitching, gauntlet cuffs, single-breasted. The skirt is well and carefully made, and has the latest style of flounce, which is lined linenette. Made in all the beautiful shades of Allen Foster & Co.'s Specialite Serge or Venetian Cloth. Costume complete, 12/6; carriage, 6d. extra. Skirt alone, 6/6; carriage, 3d. extra. This Costume in the new "Coronate" Cloth will be 21/-.

DESIGN No. 932. 10/6. The Costume Skirt of the Season. Made in ALLEN FOSTER & CO.'S Vicuna Cloth or Specialite Serge. All Colours and all Sizes in Stock. A splendid fitting skirt trimmed with glacé silk and nine rows of cording, lined throughout with good linenette. A great bargain. Price only 10/6. Carriage 3d. extra.

DESIGN NO. 673. 30/-. Stylish Costume—made with the fashionable Russian Coat—produced in Allen Foster and Co.'s new Coronate Cloth—in all the new Pastel Shades (patterns free on application). The Coat is lined silk, and the skirt with good linenette. The costume is tastefully trimmed with satin and tailor-stitching, a very charming design. Good fit and satisfaction guaranteed. Price only 30/-. Manufacturer's price.

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47 GOLDEN LANE, BARBICAN, LONDON, E.C.

Indigestion.

THE SYMPTOMS.

Pain after Eating,
Fluctuating Appetite,
Flatulence,
Nausea,
Impoverished Blood,
Biliousness,
Drowsiness after Meals,
Heart Palpitation,
Shortness of Breath,
Sallow Skin,
Coated Tongue,
Depression of Spirits,
Occasional Headaches,
Heartburn,
Disturbed Sleep,
Dizziness,
Constipation,
Waterbrash,
Sour Stomach,
Sluggish Liver.

THE REMEDY.

Guy's Tonic

is a Specific for Indigestion and its subsequent Disorders. By removing the cause the troublesome symptoms enumerated above speedily disappear. This gratifying result is accomplished because Guy's Tonic actually performs some part of the Digestive work itself, and so strengthens and invigorates the Stomach that it is shortly able to carry on its process without assistance. Health means first of all a good Digestion. How necessary then to take Guy's Tonic at once!

The following Obstinate Case of Indigestion of Twenty Years' standing, with Pain after Food, Loss of Appetite, and Loss of Flesh, was completely cured by Guy's Tonic:

"53 Caledonian Street, Leeds.

"I have been married twenty years, and for the "greater part of that time my Wife has suffered "from Indigestion, and has not been able to eat "any other fresh meat except mutton, and that only "sparingly. She has tried all sorts of medicines "without any lasting results, and one of the "leading Doctors in this city told her *she would* "*always be dyspeptic.* Her Appetite failed her, "and she began to lose flesh. I came across one "of your advertisements in which a similar case "was mentioned, and I sent out and got a bottle "of Guy's Tonic. I then got another, and now "have the satisfaction of saying that Guy's Tonic "put her all right; and her Appetite is such "that she can eat a dry crust with relish. I "think Guy's Tonic only wants to become more "widely known to be highly appreciated by "all who suffer from Indigestion and kindred "Ailments.

"B. W. Horsman."

Remember
THE CORONATION GIFT
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King Edward's Hospital Fund for London,
61 CHEAPSIDE, E.C.

"Quite Cured Her."

Mr. A. J. Crabb writes from 41 Upper Tulse Hill, London, S.W.:

"A lady friend of mine, who has been for a long time "ineffectually treated by a Physician for Indigestion and "Flatulence, wishes you to know that Guy's Tonic has "quite cured her. I must say that in all cases where I "have recommended Guy's Tonic the effects have been "simply marvellous."

Guy's Tonic is a British Preparation of Vegetable Origin. It is employed with excellent results in Hospital Practice, and is widely recommended by Medical Men. A Six-Ounce Bottle of Guy's Tonic, price 1/1½, is on sale at all Chemists' and Stores.

CHARMING PICTURES. There is no more delightful art than PAINTING WITH ALSTON'S MEDIUMS, without sandpapering, to which 45 Medals have been awarded. Easily learnt, highly appreciated, and no previous art training required. New book of Instructions, 1/-. Glasses, Photographs, and all requisites supplied. Write for Price List and Particulars of Alston's New Method.
E. ALSTON, GRIMSHAW STREET, BURNLEY.

SPLENDID WEDDING & BIRTHDAY PRESENT.
CROCKERY—21/-
We Sell Direct to User—
Straight from Manufacturer to User.
We Sell on Sale or Return. Ask your old China Dealer to do this, and he will tell you to go to Jericho and take your money with you.
1 Dinner Set, 47 pieces, printed } Unique Designs.
1 Tea Set, 21 " " } Chaste Patterns.
1 Breakfast Set, 41 pieces, pure white, finished in gold. ALL FOR 21/-.
Sample 1/-. Patterns Free.
The DIRECT SUPPLY POTTERY Co., Hanley, Staffs.

RUPTURE CURED

AFTER 21 YEARS OF SUFFERING.

One of my most interesting cases of Rupture was that of Frederick Wallington, who now lives at 11 Great Russell Street, Northampton. Mr. Wallington had a large irreducible rupture for over twenty-one years, and had given up all hopes of ever being better. He finally noticed my announcement in some paper, and decided to give my new method a trial, and I am glad to say that in less than six months he had received a perfect radical cure, and sends me his photograph and the letter I take pleasure in publishing below. I also have letters from five of his friends and neighbours, who certify to Mr. Wallington's remarkable cure.

MR. FRED. WALLINGTON.
(*From Photo.*)

11 Great Russell St., Northampton.
Dr. W. S. RICE,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I recommend to all people that are ruptured in any form your superior treatment.

I used your method for twenty-two weeks and to the best of my belief the rupture is cured, after suffering for twenty-one years and four months. I can now walk miles without being tired; before I could not walk far without resting every little way.

There are many people that knew I was ruptured for a long time, and when they see me now they say, "You walk along so much better than you did," and ask what I have been doing. I tell them that I have been using the Dr. W. S. Rice treatment for my rupture. They can hardly believe their own eyes when they see the difference in my condition, and they say they are very much pleased.—Yours truly,

FREDERICK WALLINGTON.

P.S.—You can make any use of the above you think well.

I sincerely hope this cure will help others to be benefited, and, to give every afflicted person more confidence, I will send ABSOLUTELY FREE A SAMPLE of this new method of curing Rupture, also a complete series of books explaining Rupture and its cure. Do not delay, but write at once to my London address, which is Dr. W. S. RICE (Dept. 40.D.), 9 Stonecutter Street, E.C., and I will post you the Free Sample and books by return mail. Write to-day.

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IT will be a most interesting and even fascinating account of our Monarch's life from Cradle to Crown. The first number contains a reproduction of a most beautiful allegorical picture, which was produced at the time of his birth. It represents the baby with a guardian angel over him, the parents looking on, and on the other side the picture of the Crown which will be placed upon his kingly brow in June next, when people from all parts of the world will come to witness the rejoicings in connection with the Coronation.

There are Hundreds of Anecdotes

all of them interesting, many of them amusing, a great number of them never before published.

There are Hundreds of Interesting Incidents.

Quite a pleasure to read. Anyone who takes in

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It goes without saying that it will be written in a loyal and respectful manner, albeit in such a popular way that the interest will be sustained from the first page to the last.

A large amount of care is being taken over the ILLUSTRATIONS, which will be a great feature of the work. No pains have been spared to make these of the very best.

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